

Presupposition and the processing of literary texts

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For Oremus and Joyce

Praise of the word

The word is total:
It cuts, excoriates
Forms, modulates
Perturbs, maddens
Cures or directly kills
Amplifies or reduces
According to intention
It excites or calms souls.

--Praise song of a bard of the Bambara Komo society

(quoted in Louis-Vincent Thomas and Rene Luneau, *Les Religions d'Afrique noire, textes et traditions sacres*; & cited in Gleason 1994:xxxvii)

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own composition, and that it contains no material previously submitted for the award of any other degree. The work reported in this thesis has been executed by myself, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text

Joseph Arko

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Abstract

The integration of linguistics and literature in this thesis departs theoretically and methodologically from the Stylistics and Cognitive Poetics interdisciplinarity motivated by Roman Jakobson and the Prague structuralists. Increasingly, the structuralist assumption of the transcendence of meaning, or of transparency between the signified and the signifier is being found problematic. The shift here is particularly from the New Critical and Stylistics focus on the timelessness and the autotelic nature of the literary expression as a verbal icon, to the socio-cultural conditions of authorship and interpretation of the literary work, and focus on embedded intentions, beliefs, desires and presuppositions, which enable literature to make sense and yet conceal its sense. The present inquiry is a study of the exemplary nature of the pragmatic category of presupposition as an inference type which allows the inferrer to integrate the determinate and objective text with an underlying structure of indeterminate and subjective meaning.

Presupposition, however, is typically thought of as a property of lexical and syntactic structures, as a kind of linguistic inference which survives under negation. The standard analytical praxis has been for researchers to generate sentences and apply recursive rules to determine which inferences will or will not be projected. The theoretical and empirical inadequacies of such praxis - limitation to sentence level inferential activity and assumption that every user of the language will make the same of class of inferences - make the linguistic notion of presupposition utterly unsuitable for any interdisciplinary study with literature. The phenomenological nature of the literary experience can only be accounted for by an idea of presupposition which does not only go beyond the sentence isolate but also captures the pragmatic and sociocultural contexts of communication and touches the implicit layer of intentions, beliefs and knowledge which underlie literary texts.

The basic intuition about presupposition in this thesis is that it refers either to information assumed by the speaker to be held in the mind of the hearer, or to information assumed by interlocutors to be in the common ground of discourse. Either of these views of the presupposition makes the relation linguistically underdetermined and therefore requiring interpersonal negotiation, background assumptions and cultural knowledge to be fixed. There are therefore two intertwining objectives for this inquiry: (i) to study the pragmatic category of presupposition as it operates in the ordinary processes of literary communication, and (ii) to study literary communication as part of social communication. My intention is to access and account for the interpretive activity of readers as a function of their cultural backgrounds.

My methodology is empirical: tracking readers' use of their presuppositions as they create contexts which allow them to make sense of the texts they read. This is done under experimental conditions and during interviews. I use naturalistic texts from different cultural backgrounds, and collect data from adult readers, who, like the texts, are from different cultural backgrounds. Subjects read one text which shares their own cultural background and then another which is from a foreign cultural background. I use both quantitative and qualitative procedures to analyse the data.

The data analysis accounts for both textual and reader characteristics. The procedures I adopt highlight variations in processing strategy and meaning representations which can be associated with variations in the cultural background of either the text or the reader. The analysis confirms the prediction of the crucial role of cultural background in the interpretation of texts. It is however clear from the results that readers need to master a range of processing strategies to be able to take advantage of their cultural presuppositions to construct higher levels of meaning representation. There is an exploration of implications of the study for literary pedagogy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Central to presupposition theory is Strawson's (1950) distinction between presupposition and assertion, which obviously makes the notion construable in terms of what gestalt psychologists have referred to as the *figure-ground* distinction, with the presupposed material identified as the ground and asserted material identified as the figure. In her treatment of the presupposition relation, Marmaridou (2000:147) explores the kind of meanings that a word like "stingy" might evoke. In gestaltist terms, whenever "stingy" is used to characterise a person, what is brought into figural representation is that particular person's personal quality of character; the ground is a social value, namely that spending as little as possible is not a good thing. The ground consists of a repertoire of knowledge and a system of beliefs and values which confer a certain kind of significance on the information contained in the figural representation. It seems therefore that the significance ascribed to words which are implicated in a presupposition relation depends on a repertoire of knowledge, and systems of beliefs and values that language users can bring to bear on those words. The point is that presupposition as a pragmatic category culturally implicates the process of meaning making.

The study of presupposition can therefore be the study of the effect of cultural background – the repertoire of cultural knowledge and value systems – on how language users interpret discourse. Scollon and Scollon (1981:42) studied how the processes of socialisation make available to individuals not only schemes of knowledge, values, attitudes, and so on, but also the predisposition to use those schemes in the interpretation of discourse. They referred to this combination of knowledge and interpretive procedures "reality set", which they define as the individual's cognitive orientation towards the everyday world, including how they learn about that world. Watt (1991) applied this idea of "reality set" to his study of

cultural variation in literary comprehension among German speaking Swiss readers of literature in English, and came to the conclusion that variation in literary comprehension is indeed a function of variation in the processes of the reader's socialisation.

It is the interest in the socio-cultural dimension of the literary process that draws me to the present inquiry. I was initially trained to teach in Ghanaian primary schools. Over the years, I have been through higher education programmes, which have enabled me to teach literature-in-English in Ghanaian secondary and tertiary institutions, in the course of which I have become well acquainted with the frustration of teachers, who cannot help their students to make progress in the study of literature. Having had their own formation within a tradition which isolates the text from the reader and the author, and from its historical source and setting (Willsey 2000), these teachers are, most of the time, at a loss as to how to help their pupils bring to bear on the texts the repertoires and systems of knowledge and values that can make the texts have any significance for them.

In spite of the widespread awareness of this problem within literature teaching circles in the country, there is no study, that I am aware of, that has empirically focused on the cognitive orientations of the students towards the literary texts that they read. The question is whether or not the socialisation of these learners have equipped them with the selections of knowledge, and procedures of combination which they need to deploy when they come to study literary texts. This, basically, is the question that has prompted me to undertake the present inquiry. In this quest, I will be investigating the reality sets of readers in a cross-cultural study between Ghanaian students and students from another cultural background, to find out what particularly distinguish Ghanaian readers of literature from readers who come from another cultural background.

A study of the selection of knowledge schemes which readers access and the cognitive procedures they use to make sense of texts is actually a study of their presuppositions and how they deploy those presuppositions to interpret texts. It is

also an inquiry into the reader's level of literacy attainment. It is quite usual, these days, to find references to literacy not merely in terms of the ability to read and write, but also in terms of a hierarchy of skills involving the ability to comprehend, interpret, analyse, respond and interact with a variety of complex sources of information (e.g. Sensenbaugh 1990; Morrell 2002). Yadden et al (1999) have noted the crucial nature of literacy learning to the understanding of the rich and complex processes by which we make sense of the world mediated by print. In the study of how readers use their presuppositions to process literary texts, my focus will be on accounting for cultural distinctions in readers' mobilisation of higher level intellectual processes, which enable them to go beyond the limits of the textual stimulus when they read literary texts.

There are therefore two intertwining motivations for this inquiry: (i) to study the pragmatic category of presupposition as it operates in the processes of literary interpretation, and (ii) to study literary communication as part of social communication. This study should necessarily proceed as an interdisciplinary study of presupposition and literary communication. The approach will be empirical: accessing interpreters' presuppositions as they process narratives in experimental conditions and interviewing them on the texts after the reading exercises. While not adopting the position of a rigid cultural determinist, I wish to use this research to ascertain what may be the distinctive effects of readers' presuppositions, as functions of their cultural backgrounds and processes of their socialisation, on the ways in which they interpret literary texts.

In the rest of this chapter I will make brief surveys of presupposition theory, the interdisciplinary study of language and literature, and the relation between pragmatics and literary theory. I will end the chapter with an overview of the thesis.

1.2. Presupposition as a form of inference

Relating the linguistic category of presupposition to the processes of literary interpretation may be quite challenging since any link that there might be between

the normally determinate linguistic inference and the indeterminate and open inference system, which is literature, is not easily obvious. While linguistic description aims at regular and universal tendencies, literature can be characterized as a changeable and context shifting discourse type. Sternberg (2001) however refers to presupposition as most effective among inference types which allow the inferer to integrate the text with any given context. He argues that as an uncancellable yet shiftable inference, presupposition typifies the shuttle among language, world and perspective whereby we make sense of discourse. In this introductory chapter, I wish to draw attention to the pragmatic nature of the presupposition inference and to its context sensitivity, both of which are crucial to literary interpretation.

Sternberg (2001) notes that traditional approaches to presupposition share the originary paradigm, which legislates that the relation is an *a priori*, univocal and formalized inference, based on the deductive model or ideal. Standard tests for presupposition were felicity judgements and implications between sentences. Presuppositions were supposed to be constraints on the range of worlds/models against which one could evaluate the truth or falsity of predications and other semantic operations, or against which such evaluations were legitimate. If these constraints were not met, semantic undefinedness or illegitimacy of the truth-value resulted (Beaver 1996:6). The logician van Frassen (e.g. 1969), for instance, held that presupposition was a semantic notion, i.e. a relation between sentences, neither subject to the exigencies of context nor the indeterminacies of user intention or belief. Reasoning about presupposition was construed as pure, deductive, semantic and monotonic.

The history of presupposition scholarship, however, has also depicted the relation as an inference type which is difficult to constrain within the confines of classical logic and deductive reasoning. Turner (1992) points out that the original proposals made by Strawson (1950; 1952; 1964) on presupposition were intended to characterise an inference type that cannot be subjected to the limits of formal reasoning and classical logic. Turner notes that in making those proposals, Strawson's specific target was Bertrand Russell's (1905) *Theory of Descriptions*, but his general target was the

logician's attempt to do justice to any of the uses of the expressions of ordinary language. Strawson, according to Turner, was attempting to establish a certain kind of intrinsic divergence between language as used and language as reflected in logical forms. While Strawson's essentially 'pragmatic' philosophy of language is well known (e.g. Linsky 1967; Hochberg 1970:314; Sellars 1970:173), presupposition as an inference type linked to ordinary use of language actually became obvious only in the pressures it exercised on logicians to abandon classical bivalence, the law of the excluded middle and *modus tollens* (see Gazdar 1979; Beaver 1996), all of which are fundamental to formal logical reasoning. Researchers began drawing attention to what they saw to be the defeasibility of presupposition, especially when it came under the scope of negation (e.g. Levinson 1983; Carston 1998; 1999), and the view that presupposition was a species of logical inference seemed more and more untenable.

As the shiftable nature of the presupposition inference became part of conventional wisdom, presupposition theories (e.g. Karttunen 1974; Karttunen & Peters 1979, Gazdar 1979; Soames 1979; 1982; Heim 1983; van der Sandt 1988; 1992) began responding to the context dependency of the relation. As Beaver (1996) observes, whereas the logical/semantic theories understood presupposition as a binary relation between sentences, the context dependent theories involved definitions of presupposition as a three-place relation between a pair of sentences and a context of evaluation. From the contextless deductive logics in which presupposition inference was framed, came a shift towards presupposition as a form of pragmatic reasoning. Pragmatic reasoning is concerned with what follows from the premises in a given context. Contextual changes lead to pragmatic rather than semantic conclusions. Contexts are typically underspecified since they tend to include elements that are taken for granted. It is also the case that as our premise set increases, some of our earlier conclusions may prove incorrect. Pragmatic reasoning is therefore defeasible and non-monotonic (Bell 1992).

Stalnaker (1974) argued that the pragmatic concept of presupposition was something closer to the ordinary notion of presupposition. He made proposals which will make

it possible to explain presupposition in terms of the general maxims of communication rather than in terms of complicated ad-hoc hypothesis about particular words in particular constructions. The pragmatic account of presupposition then became tied to the explication and determination of contexts of communication. However, as Kadmon (2001) has noted, “context” may mean a number of different things. It may in fact be construed, as in extensional logic, as the circumstances of evaluation, a model containing possible worlds in which the truth of a state of affairs may be verified. But we can also talk of “context of utterance”, which includes the speech situation, i.e. the location, time, speaker, addressees, various salient objects, and so on. This notion of context includes also the various assumptions that the participants in a conversation make about the world in general and about the subject matter of the conversation in particular. It includes also the assumptions that interlocutors make about the beliefs and intentions of each other, and so on. Therefore, even though context is crucial for the understanding of language use and interpretation, its actual role in discourse varies from theorist to theorist.

In his review of some of the most representative works in the field of presupposition research, Werth (1993:46) notes that despite the many attempts made to incorporate contextual information into presupposition analysis, most of those works continue to remain firmly fixed conceptually within the limited perspective of the isolated sentence. Werth indicates his particular frustration with the work of van der Sandt (e.g. 1988; 1992), because although his account is extremely close to genuine discourse approach, he remains stuck with a sentence level account of presupposition. Werth’s general impression is that van der Sandt seems to be tantalizingly close to a genuine contextual account of language because he works with a notion of context that is close to Common Ground (CG), in the sense of Stalnaker (1974). Van der Sandt, however, according to Werth, fails to see that what his machinery actually gives him is a device for keeping track of propositions in a discourse, which means he no longer needs presuppositions at the sentence level. What he needs is a conception of presupposition as part of discourse level backgrounded information; something he fails to recognise.

Anyone who makes even a cursory survey of contemporary standard work on presupposition is bound to feel the same kind of frustration that Werth felt with the work of van der Sandt. Standard presupposition research continues to be bogged down with preoccupations with contextual satisfaction, acceptability, binding and accommodation – the same preoccupations which obsessed presupposition researchers of the mid-seventies. Analytical implementation of context remains degraded at the sentential level. Piwek & Krahmer's (1997) idea of global interpretation in terms of the hearer trying to understand the current sentence in terms of preceding sentences is revealing of praxis in the field. According to van Eijck and Kamp,

The key behind the theory of semantics of coherent multi-sentence discourse and text that is presented in this paper – Discourse Representation Theory, or DRT for short – is that each new sentence *S* of the discourse is interpreted in the context provided by the sentences preceding it (van Eijck & Kamp 1996:1).

It may be suggested that retention at the sentence level is mainly an effect of the analytical commitment to logical and mathematical formalisation of discourse. Piwek & Krahmer consider van der Sandt's use of Kamp's Discourse Representation Semantics as an advanced realisation of Stalnaker's basic intuitions. Christiansen (1999) describes an abstract model, which he says is an implementation of context and accommodation which can be seen as formalisation of Stalnaker's informal characterisation. His "more systematic" presentation is based on earlier ad-hoc experiments with simplified natural language analysis by means of abduction in metalogic setting. The field is actually cluttered with logics of different kinds: Constructive Type Theories (Piwek and Krahmer 1997), Property Theory (Manara & de Roeck 1997), Beaver's Kinematic Predicate Logic and van Eijck's Error-state Semantics for Discourse Predicate Logic (see Krahmer 1995). While these formalisms make for objective representation and theoretical elegance, they have precious little to say about natural usage and normal exchange of information in the communicative situation.

Sternberg (2001) argues that the study of presupposition could not, and cannot,

possibly advance on the formalistic terms established by the philosophers and taken up with variations by linguists, pragmaticists, discourse analysts, and others. For presupposition research to realise Strawson's basic intuitions about natural language usage, there is the need to focus on socio-cultural aspects of discourse. Keenan (1971:50) observed that many sentences require culturally defined contexts for the utterance to be understood. He claimed that such cultural contexts are encoded in discourse as presuppositions. If they are not satisfied the utterance will not be understood or else will be understood in a non-literal way. Givon (1989) assumed that presuppositions constitute the bulk of background knowledge, which can be located at the intersection between linguistics and anthropology, and against which inter-personal behaviour and communication take place. To characterise the structural homologies which interpreters deploy to reduce linguistic indeterminacy, presupposition theory should divest itself of mathematical irrelevances, discourse formalisations, with their essentialist and rationalist patterns of thinking, and engage existential approaches by studying how real speakers and hearers generate and interpret presuppositions in natural usage.

The thesis of this study is that the characterisation of presupposition inference need not follow formalistic lines. Culler (1981; 2002) examines the role of presupposition in narrative comprehension, particularly, with regard to intertextuality in fiction without having to resort to recursive rules and mathematical algorithms. Similarly, Werth (1993) focused on the use of background assumptions in his analysis of one Hemingway short story by accessing not only linguistic contexts of the narrative but also socio-cultural information to make sense of the text. Sbisa's (1999) study of presuppositions in political discourse in the Italian press looks at how social norms and moral values are presented in texts as backgrounded suppositions, which should be treated as unquestionable and valid for the texts to be interpreted according to the author's intentions. None of these studies considered the link between the text and its underlying structure of presuppositions as transparent, or else, unproblematic, and therefore simply expressible by the use of logical relations or formulas. I wish to propose that those studies employ pragmatically natural ways to work with a common sense view of presupposition. It is along these lines that presupposition, as

an inference type, can have any relevance for the interpretation of literary texts.

1.3. Linguistics-literature interdisciplinarity

The study of the presupposition in relation to the interpretation of literary texts obviously locates the inquiry at the intersection of linguistics and literary theory. Common interests in language, genre, meaning, communication and dialogue are some of the motivations that can support such an interdisciplinary study. The recent history of the two disciplines has witnessed changing analytical paradigms and categories of thought which seem to be converging on common attitudes towards the analysis of meaning, the relation between linguistic expression and external reality, and the place of history and culture in the study of meaning. In this section, I will take a brief look at certain efforts, particularly triggered by Roman Jakobson and the Prague structuralists, to study literature and language in an interdisciplinary paradigm.

In “Linguistics and Poetics”, the Russian structuralist, Roman Jakobson (1960/1988) made his famous call for linguistics-literature interdisciplinarity. He claimed that the time when linguists and literary historians eluded questions of poetic structure was safely behind us. Jakobson, believed in the competence of linguistics to embrace the field of poetics. He declared that “a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unversant with linguistic methods are all flagrant anachronisms” (Jakobson 1960/1988:54). As Lodge (1988:31) has noted, Jakobson’s call had “the inculcable effect of bringing to the attention of British and American critics the richness of the structuralist tradition of poetics and textual analysis that originated in Eastern and Central Europe”.

In the West, the structuralist framework of linguistics, represented by Saussure and Bloomfield, had been clearly extreme in their exclusion of interdisciplinary work. According to Sell (1991) this was the result of the behaviourist attempt to introduce analytical frameworks characteristic of the ‘hard sciences’ into the study of linguistics. There was in this framework the idea of transcendental meaning, which

claimed some sort of transparency between the 'signified' and the 'signifier', i.e. the word and its referent in the real world. When structuralism eventually migrated into literary theory it took the forms of Stylistics and New Criticism, both of which held a view of the timelessness of the literary expression, its autotelic nature and the uniqueness of poetic text as verbal icon. Mackay (1996) has described the position of Stylistics as defined by two myths: (i) the myth of objectivity, which assumed that stylistic models were 'explicit' and 'retrievable' and therefore akin to scientific analysis; (ii) the common sense myth of language, which assumed the idea of a core meaning of linguistic expressions and intersubjectivity, i.e. individuals from a defined community would understand language in the same way.

Current attempts at linguistics-literature interdisciplinarity are undertaken in the field of Cognitive Poetics. Unlike the Stylistics studies of the 1970s, which used categories and functions of an external grammar to describe literary structure, this new interdisciplinarity seeks to use internal processes and states of the internal grammar to describe literary interpretation. Herbert Simon (1995) for instance has claimed that cognitive science has reached the point in the understanding of human thinking where it can say a great deal about literary criticism; in particular that it can cast some light on the theoretical foundations of criticism and even generate useful advice for its practice. It should be remembered, however, (as Carston 2002:5 notes), that in Chomsky's view, cognitive study focuses only on those verbal processes which can yield systematic understanding and deliver the logical forms of linguistic expressions, since they are fully determined by a system of domain specific principles responsive to the acoustic properties of speech, that is, they are context independent.

Supporters of the cognitive paradigm have expressed the belief that science of the mind, in crucial ways, is committed to non-variant processes of meaning making. Turner (1995), for instance, claims that the human mind is "prediscursive, not entirely created or structured through cultural discourse as a patchwork of narrow historical contingencies". According to Spolsky (2003) cognitive science is to offer historical/cultural studies consideration of universals of cognitive processing as they

function in several contexts. That is, she believes that the study of the human brain is in the situation of needing to construct bridges between permanently irreconcilable but variously interesting bits of culture.

Cognitive science, which follows Chomsky's "rather rigid criteria for the scientific study of the mind" (Barsky 1996), is unequal to the task of literary study. Chomsky actually excluded human communication from the sciences. According to him, we have to turn to the arts, to novelists and playwrights in order to get some (inevitably unsystematic and anecdotal) insights into communication and interpretation (see Carston 2002:5). Some commentators (e.g. Jackson 2003; Adler & Gross 2002) have pointed out that the thrust towards the cognitive science-literature interdisciplinarity is to make literature an "exact" and empirical science, which strives for universally agreed facts, finality and determinacy, not expected in literature. Adler & Gross (2002) insist that literary claims are made through speculation and argumentation rather than 'solving' and 'proving'. Literature, they point out, has the openness which invites and accommodates what the reader brings of him/herself. There is the other question of how neurological processes, which are studied in the field of cognitive science, can be translated into cultural facts and achievements.

van Oort (2003) indicates that cognitive science lacks an adequate model to account for the task of interpreting human culture. He distinguishes between biological questions, which can be explained by means of mechanistic procedures, and anthropological questions, which can only be explained by functional procedures, and then argues that there is lack of causality between worldly objects and the social symbolic representation of culture. Causal relationship between perception of worldly objects and their social symbolic representation in culture is not in one-to-one correlation with the explanatory categories of biology. van Oort makes references to Deacon's (1997) anthropological model of cognition, which proposes that cognition is fundamentally a process of interpreting increasingly complex layers of reference. Deacon makes use of Peirce's semiotic categories of *icon*, *index* and *symbol*, and describes each mode as requiring a different kind of cognitive response. Cognition is hierarchical and each level implies the lower levels of reference.

Deacon anthropologises Peirce's triadic schema and argues that iconic and indexical representations are supported by the nervous systems of every kind. Symbolic representations evolved only in human species. Icons and indexes allow external physical representation to be represented internally. Symbolic reference requires a shift in overall cognitive perspective.

However, to claim that most of our experience of the world is symbolic is not to deny the cognitive make-up. Human experience inherits the bottom-up iconic and indexical representation strategies from our pre-symbolic past. But we inherit also the virtual/symbolic world – a cultural world; and that involves not bottom-up, but top-down processes. We impose world categories and functions (symbolic meanings) that cannot be explained in terms of biological structure. Therefore for symbolic representation there can be no adequate scientific explanation. van Oort concludes that cognitive poetics is misguided because symbolic processes cannot be sufficiently explained on the basis of underlying cognitive processes. According to him, without a model for collective/social functioning of symbolic meaning we cannot understand the origin and evolution of human cognition.

It is obvious that the field of the cognitive science is severely constrained. Once interest begins to focus on intentions, beliefs, desires and presuppositions, there occurs a shift away from the field of the predictable and the controllable. If cognitive science gets to constrain literature into its limited zone, literature would lose its power dazzle and intrigue. As Harrison (1995) notes, there is reticence in literature; it says things without saying so; makes perfect sense yet conceals its sense, the source of its sense is not merely in the fabric of its phenomenal surface. It is difficult to ascertain how cognitive science, with its disdain for interpretation, can account for the implicit in discourse, unuttered common experiences, and the community's presuppositions. Harrison's scepticism for the claims of cognitive poetics seems well founded. He notes that the mind that should penetrate the imagistic world of literature is not the same kind of mind that cognitive science takes upon itself to understand. That mind defies transcendental unity of apperception and does not relate to the world through stable categories of cognition.

1.4. Pragmatics and Literary Studies

The linguistics-literature interdisciplinarity being pursued in the present inquiry is a shift from the theory and practice of Stylistics in the sense that the focus here will not merely be on the cognitive aspects of literary interpretation, but on its socio-cultural aspects as well. This study will draw from the re-contextualisation trend in linguistics, which may be noted in the interdisciplinary approaches of linguistic pragmatics. While Pratt (1977) pioneered this path by drawing attention to the importance of the address to the hearer in all narrative texts, her Speech Act Theory of literature never got to evaluating how literature impinges on life or ideology and therefore she underestimated the interpersonal dynamics of literary activity.

The drive towards the new language-literature interdisciplinarity, as Sell (1991) indicates, got its decisive fillip when both literary and linguistic scholars came to a sense of the co-substantiality of language and literature. Sell refers specifically to the sociolinguistic poetics of Bakhtin (e.g. Bakhtin 1981), which led to insights into the relationships between the languages of literature and the wide range of sociolects – the heteroglossia – operative within any community. Sell uses the term, “literary pragmatics” to refer to the emerging new interdisciplinarity. He notes that most of previous language-literature interdisciplinaritys were bi-polar: between language and action or between language and psyche, between language and society, or between language and literature, literature and society, or literature and readers. These are in contrast with the pragmatic dimension, which is tri-polar, linking language and literature with society.

Watt (1991) has argued that pragmatics must concern itself with textual meaning beyond the linguistic structure of the literary text itself by looking outwards towards aspects of the sociocultural affiliation of authors/readers and the complexities of literary communication beyond simplistic assumptions of message transference by means of a code through a channel from a sender to a receiver. According to Watt,

literary pragmatics must be able to encompass both methods of considering the relationships between the linguistic structures of the literary text, the users of those texts, and the contexts in which the texts are produced and interpreted.

In the new interdisciplinarity, literary writing and reading are treated as forms of communicative activity, and the literary pragmatics is assumed to be continuous with pragmatics of communication in general. Sell (2001a) points out that linguists who were interested in communicative considerations at all had phonocentric views, assuming that speech, because it involved the language user's bodily presence, was communication at its most authentic, whereas writing was merely secondary and derivative. However, other linguists, especially, discourse analysts and applied linguists in the field of composition and rhetoric are recognising that writing is not only interpersonal but also implicitly dialogic. This dialogic view of writing compels a shift from the Gazdarian (1979) idea of pragmatics as the study of meaning minus truth conditions of the sentence uttered, which has dominated most of presupposition research, to Verschueren's (1995) construal of pragmatics in terms of the cognitive, social and cultural study of language and communication. Verschueren's view of pragmatics, as he indicates, foregrounds (i) language use, (ii) cognitive processes, (iii) the social world, and (iv) cultural constraints, all of which are of great importance in a pragmatics-literature interdisciplinary study. Verschueren notes that his perspective, which studies language in relation to behaviour, makes strong empirical demands, relates to meaning for the people involved in language use, and combines an interpretive stance.

These stipulations have methodological implications for the pragmatic study of literary interpretation. Basically, the researcher will have to leave the cloister of the desk space and venture into the field, and give preference to empirical rather than to introspective data. Additionally, it will not be for the analyst to figure out what the meaning of literary texts could be. It is inevitable that interpreters should be ordinary readers who are trying to make sense of literary texts. Interpretive procedures that need to be carried out in this study will be to ascertain how the triad of language, literature and society configure to impact the cognitive efforts which readers make in

order to interpret literary texts.

Previous interdisciplinary efforts linking literature to some other discipline have invariably always been “imperialistic” (Simon 1995), with the other discipline seeking to take over or absorb literary studies into the confines of its own disciplinary praxis. Literary pragmatics does not make any such pretensions. The premise of this type of interdisciplinarity is the assumption that literature and pragmatics share common concerns with language, genre, meaning making and the socio-cultural value of discourse. It should be remembered that Morris’s (1938) original distinction of semiotics into syntax, semantics and pragmatics characterises pragmatics in terms of the relationship between language and its users. That pragmatics can easily be integrated with literature becomes obvious when it is realised that the debate in contemporary literary theory about where meaning is perceived to inhere (Lang 2005), may be seen as mapping directly onto the pragmatic concern with the speaker, the hearer and the interaction between them. I will use the remaining part of this section to highlight some particulars of this debate in literary theory to underline the pragmatic basis of such concerns.

Schweickart (1986/1988) has observed that models of literary criticism are organised around (i) the issue of control – whether it is the text or the reader who has control, and (ii) what constitutes objectivity of the text – what is in the text, and what is supplied by the reader. In fact, it is also generally assumed that the role of the author in the control of meaning generation is one of the most disputed issues in literary criticism. Literary criticism and hermeneutics originally assumed that meaning resided with the author. As Lang (2005) has noted, interpretation from this point of view was meant to discern the author’s intention and unlock textual meaning for all time. Hirsch (1976/1988) has even argued that the text cannot be interpreted from a perspective different from the author’s; to do so will not be interpretation but authorship.

There have been a number of attempts, however, to scale down the dominance of the author. Taha (2002) has claimed that Wayne Booth’s idea of the ‘implied author’

was part of the effort to moderate the demand for the author's domination over literary meaning. Sell (2001a) notes that attempts were made in the second half of the 20th century to deprive the author of any autonomy. He talks about the attempts by structuralists like Barthes, Foucault, Lacan and Kristeva to decentre the sense of individual selfhood by underlining the extent to which human beings and their experiences are structured by society, culture and language. Barthes actually pronounced the death of the author, reducing writers to mere scriptors. The position of Barthes (1977/1988) (and of Foucault (1979/1988) as well) was that the author's role served to put a limit on the set of interpretations that could be given to the text. According to this view, cutting the relationship with the author allows the work to be reconstructed not as thought or experience but in terms of its structure, architecture, intrinsic form and play of its interrelationships. According to Foucault, limitation of the author function will allow fiction, in its polysemic texts, to function without constraint.

The effect of the structuralist assault on the integrity of author has been far reaching. Lye (1993; 2001) for instance has observed that modernism holds the text as separate from the author, and that texts mean in relation to other texts, not in relation to the lives of their authors. According to Lye the concept of the author as the concept to read and understand has lost its salience and validity. Grossman (2005) observes that contemporary literary criticism has rewritten the basic definition of terms like "text," "author," and "audience," by arguing that the meaning of a text is not identical with its author's original intent. Taha (2002) notes that the transference of authority from the author to the text was a transference to the linguistic system and to linguistic conventions outside the text. The attempt was to free the text to mean what it will mean in any culture and any time (Willsey 2000). This must have been the basis of the New Critical denunciation of what they referred to as 'intentional fallacy' (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954). Hilscher (2005) argues that New Criticism attempted to downplay past romantic ideals of poetry interpretation by defining meaning as a concrete entity that could be formally and objectively analyzed to deliver the same meaning to all readers. New Criticism therefore represented an ascendancy of a more text focused hermeneutics where the author's intention, even if it could be

discerned, was irrelevant to the work at hand (Lang 2005). In semiotic/pragmatic terms, New Critics assigned literary value only to the code.

Hirsch's (1976/1988) author-centred theory of meaning notwithstanding, he believed that every act of interpretation involved two perspectives: the author's and the interpreter's. More and more critics came to recognise the role of the reader in the process of meaning construction. Musselwhite (1973:86) realised that a word is precisely the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, or between addresser and addressee. In committing the author to death, Roland Barthes (1977/1988) sought the birth of the reader. He claimed that the reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a text are inscribed without any of them being lost. For him a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. According to Schmidt (2000) the Greek philosopher Democritus argued that we are absolutely unable to separate perception and perceived objects from one another. We can never get behind our perceptual activities to compare the unperceived with the perceived object and so detect whether or not our perception correctly represents the "real object." Object and perception, subject and object, or system and environment are, in Democritus' view, inseparable. That is to say the code and decoder are not always distinguishable from each other.

While the New Critics sought to secure the text objectively with verifiable results in the critical process, reader response critics opened the door for the reader to focus on his or her mental processes in the act of reading. Willsey (2000) notes that emphasis on the role of the reader in determining the meaning of a text ranges from simple admission that all readers bring biases (presuppositions) to the reading of a text, to the assertion that the only meaning in a text is that which the reader gives it. As Sanders (2005) observes, what all reader-response theories seem to have in common is that interpretation is 'transactional', a bargaining between the reader and the text; and they describe reading as a "process". New Critics, by contrast, often referred to "readings" of texts, as static products rather than as dynamic experiences.

Reading response critics differ mainly in terms of their characterisation of the reader,

and also in their conception of the role of the text in the process of meaning construction. While some of them studied real readers, others postulated idealised reader constructs to express their theories of meaning. I would like to look briefly at the reader constructs postulated by Fish and Iser, to underline how reading response critics have dealt with the basically pragmatic concern with the author (encoder), the text (code) and the reader (decoder).

Fish (1976) intends to advance his theory to be in opposition to the common assumption that there is a sense embedded in the text or encoded in the text and that this sense can be taken at a glance. He argues that such a position ignores and devalues the reader's activities since the text is assumed to be self sufficient and the reader is thought of as a disposable machinery of extraction. Fish places the reader's activities at the centre of attention, not that he regards them as leading to meaning, but that as having meaning. For him those activities are interpretive (pragmatic) since they are at every moment settling and resettling questions of value. Fish weaves his theory around what he calls "the intended reader", who he characterises as the reader whose education, opinions, concerns, linguistic competence and so on make him/her capable of having the experience that the author wished to provide. Fish introduces the caveat that he will admit to such a reader only if its realisation is not conceived narrowly, as a single act of comprehending an author's purpose, rather than as a succession of acts readers perform in the continuing assumption that they are dealing with intentional beings.

In Fish's view discerning an intention is no more or less than understanding; and understanding includes (is constituted by) all the activities which he calls the experience of the reader. To describe that experience is therefore to describe the reader's efforts at understanding, and to describe the reader's efforts at understanding is to describe his realisation (in two senses) of an author's intention. Fish admits to the circularity of accounting for the author's intention by means of the reader's efforts at arriving at those intentions. According to him to construct the profile of the informed reader is at the same time to construct the author's intention, and vice-versa because to do either is to specify the contemporary conditions of utterance, to

identify by becoming members of the community made up of those who share interpretive strategies.

Fish opposes the assumption that the formal patterns of texts exist independently of the reader's experience. He claims that what really happens is that rather than intention and its formal realisation producing interpretation, interpretation creates intention and its formal realisation, by creating the conditions under which it becomes possible to pick them out. He suggests that the formal units are always the function of the interpretive model one brings to bear; they are not in the text. Fish's thesis is that the form of the reader's experience, formal units, and the structure of intention are one; that they come into view simultaneously, and that questions of priority and independence do not arise. From this perspective, interpretive control and stability are functions of interpretive strategies rather than of texts. According to Fish, it is the function of "interpretive communities", made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions, to ensure that interpretations are not bizarre or capricious. Fish held that since it is the interpretive community which determines what is determinate and what is not, the focus of critical theory should be on the workings of those interpretive communities, and not on the "texts themselves". Fish argues that there is no such thing as the "text itself," anyway, and even if there were, there would be nothing inside the text (see Fish 1980; Berube 2004). Fish therefore conferred prior existence only to the reader/decoder, and for him it is the reader's presuppositions alone that structure the aesthetic object.

Iser's theory of meaning hinges on the phenomenological theory of art, which lays full stress on the idea that in considering a literary work, one might take into account not only the actual text but also, in equal measure, the (pragmatic) actions involved in responding to that text. According to such a view, it is the convergence of the text (code) and the reader (decoder) that brings the literary work into existence. In the final chapter of his book, *The Implied Reader* (1974), Iser argues that there are "two poles" in any text: the artistic, which refers to the text created by the author, and the

aesthetic, which is the realisation accomplished by the reader. Somewhere between the poles is “the literary work,” which readers create by reading or “realizing” a text. The aesthetic is the “virtual dimension” that comes into being as a result of the convergence between textual horizons and reader presuppositions.

Iser (1978) draws on Sterne’s conception of literature as an arena in which reader and author participate in a game of the imagination¹. Iser argues that the literary text needs the reader’s imagination, which gives shape to the interaction of correlatives foreshadowed in textual structure by sequence of sentences. Iser decontextualises and dehistoricises the text and the reader, which means that the reader always reads the text in relation to his or her extra-literary norms, values and experiences. This brings forth the concept of ‘concretization’ in a text, where the text is ‘completed’ in reading, meaning that the ‘gaps’ in the text are said to be ‘filled’ by the reader in the act of reading or producing the “virtual” work. While Iser does not set the boundaries of the text’s determinacy and the reader’s filling of the ‘gaps’, the phenomenological aspect of his work calls for the reader’s experience to be the central concept. For him, the fact that completely different readers can be differently affected by the reality of a particular text is ample evidence of the degree to which literary texts transform reading into a creative process that is far above perception of what is written. The literary text activates our own faculties, enabling us to recreate the world it presents.

Iser postulates “the implied reader” in contradistinction to other reader constructs in the literature. He claims the implied reader transcends the limitations of the superreader, the informed reader, and the intended reader, as it “embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect” (Iser 1974:163). Iser particularly distinguishes the implied reader from “the contemporary reader”, who is reconstructed from the knowledge of social history as this is applied to the text, and “ideal reader”, who is “extrapolated from the reader’s role laid down in the text,” and often seems to be a mirror image of the author: he can interpret any work or solve any problem because he knows all potential meanings of the text and all of

¹ Recall the philosophy of the latter Wittgenstein which saw ordinary language usage as a kind of game.

the codes of the author. Although, as Mayfield (1978) has noted, these types of readers provide workable strategies of looking at a piece of literature, Iser believes they still impose limits upon the reader's experience or function: one must not predetermine the reader's "character or his historical situation" (Iser 1978:34). In his concept of "the implied reader" he seeks to avoid this problem.

Iser plants his "implied reader" firmly in the structure of the text, which ultimately, anticipates the presence of a recipient. The term designates a network of response-inviting structures, which impel the reader to grasp the text. Iser talks about a standpoint that the text must bring about for the reader to visualise things that would never have come into focus as long as his own habitual dispositions were determining his orientation. The implied reader's role is to occupy the vantage points that are geared to the pre-structured activity, and to fit the diverse perspectives into gradually evolving pattern. Iser claims that his concept of "the implied reader" as an expression of the role offered by the text is in no way an abstraction derived from a real reader, but is rather the conditioning force behind a particular kind of tension produced when the reader has to coincide his/her beliefs with the author's. Iser argues that the fact that the role of the reader can be fulfilled in different ways, according to the historical or individual circumstances is an indication that the structure of the text allows for different ways of fulfilment. Each fulfilment is a selective realisation of the implied reader, whose own structure provides a frame of reference within which individual responses to a text can be communicated to others.

As Hamilton (2002) has noted, Iser (1989:59) accepts that his implied reader is "always a double figure", i.e. a reader-in-the-text and a reader. But he also argues that the implied reader has less to do with the reader-in-the-text, and more with what happens "whenever we perform the role assigned to us by placing ourselves at the disposal of someone else's thoughts, thereby relegating our own beliefs, norms, and values to the background" (1989:63). While Fish's "intended reader" is a monistic construct emerging from and controlled only by the interpretive community, Iser's "implied reader" is a dualist figure, which emerges from the tension between textual constraints and reader dispositions. Schweikart (1986/1988) suggests that Iser's

theory ultimately implies the determinacy of the text and the authority of the author, who guarantees the unity of the work, but requires the reader's creative participation, through the text, and pre-structures the shape of the aesthetic subject produced by the reader. But she notes in addition that we can say that the gaps that structure the reader's response are not built into the text, but appear (or not) as a result of the particular interpretive strategies used by the reader. Iser's negotiation of the tension which underlines the interaction between reader construction and self-evident textual constraints preserves the integrity of both the text and the reader (see Mailloux 1982; Thomas 2000). Iser therefore allows prior existence to all three pragmatic entities: the encoder, the code and the decoder. The literary process reconstitutes the decoder, out of the tension of the three entities, into the implied reader, and transforms the code, from the same tension of the convergence of the three elements, into the aesthetic object. The implied reader and the aesthetic object have no prior existence; they come into being only as a result of the literary interaction.

The duality in the Iserian literary interaction, if it stands on the principle of total parity between the pragmatic parties could serve the purpose of this research very well. As long as the focus of this study is on the process of reading, it is to investigate how readers use their own dispositions, repertoires of knowledge and systems of values to recover what they assume to be the author's intention indexed by surface features of the text. As Sell (2001a) notes, readers may be influenced by their own situationality, which may render the author's text incomprehensible or even be given quite a new bearing. However, as social individuals, we enter into co-adaptations with each other. This co-adaptability allows human beings to distance themselves from their own immediate context, to empathise with somebody whose context is different, to weigh the two contexts and their life-worlds against each other, with a change to the status quo as one possible outcome. This means that the process of communication flux from historical state to state is not completely predictable, because it is not completely determined. The object of this inquiry is to empirically spell out how these happen, with special interest in the distinctions that are attributable to the cultural background of authors, texts and readers.

1.5. Overview of thesis

Chapter 2 is a discussion of an interdisciplinary theory of pragmatic presupposition and literary communication. The understanding of literary texts is analysed in terms of readers' construction of fictional worlds, and this process is deemed to be continuous with the processes of discourse understanding in general. The analysis draws on multi-disciplinary sources: linguistics, literary theory, cognitive psychology, socio-cultural theory. The first major theme is indeterminacy and slippage of meaning. The linguistic analysis of presupposition dwells on Stalnaker's idea of context as common ground; it debunks the idea that common ground necessarily implies mutual knowledge and raises the question of convergence between the context of production and context of interpretation. The claim that such contexts rarely converge is supported with insights from literary theory. The second major theme is the recovery of the implicit in natural discourse. The analysis draws on the pragmatic theory of information packaging, the gestaltist distinction of *figure and ground*, and the schema theory to explain the processes of recovery of the implicit in discourse. The role of socio-cultural background in the generation and instantiation of knowledge schemata is discussed. And this leads to the question of cultural and individual identity.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in the data collection. It begins with a discussion of quantitative and positivist paradigms favoured by discourse psychologists, who work within the computational framework; and the qualitative paradigms used extensively in phenomenological and ethnomethodological studies. There is a discussion of Protocol Analysis, which is the main data collection procedure used in this research. The standard weaknesses of this procedure are identified and corrective measures instituted. Methodologically, this research forms part of the empirical studies of literature, and it adopts most of its procedures in terms of test materials, selection of subjects and experimental discipline. The research experiments and interviews are also described.

Chapter 4 describes the processes of data transcription, segmentation and

categorisation. The transcription uses simplified Conversation Analysis procedures. The segmentation procedures result from philosophical, pragmatic and computational theories of knowledge representation concerning compositionality and discreteness of meaning. There is a search for a motivated procedure to identify natural boundaries between idea units in subjects' verbal data. This is what settles the question of the unit of analysis. Each unit of data is then classified in terms of processing strategy, which is distinguished into primary (linguistic), secondary (semantic) and tertiary (pragmatic) processes. Those units classified as involving higher level (tertiary) processes are then re-classified into categories of knowledge representation.

Chapter 5 focuses on the analysis of readers' processing strategies. The analysis combines quantitative and qualitative procedures. Formal statistical/inferential procedures are used to determine the statistical differences that obtain between the participating groups of readers. The qualitative analysis addresses readers' uses of their presuppositions to construct representations for the narrative texts.

Chapter 6 is concerned with the analysis of readers' mental representations. It also uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative procedures. The qualitative analysis requires that readers' data be submitted to a number of re-classification processes in an adaptation of phenomenological psychological procedures developed by Giorgi (e.g. 1985), to isolate thematic representations which readers may have used in their responses. Distinctions between the groups are made in accordance with the structure and content of their thematic representations. This chapter is climaxed with the analysis of the self disclosures of one reader from the fictional representations she constructs for the texts.

Chapter 7 summarises the findings, identifies the theoretical and methodological significance of the findings, and explores implications of the findings for constructivist literature teaching in educational and literacy programmes.

Chapter 2: Presupposition, literary processing and fictional worlds

2.1. Introduction

When Iser (1978) talks about the tension that occurs at the convergence of reader dispositions and textual constraints during the literary process, he was intending to foreground the ambivalence of the textual effect, which at one time enables the reader to construct the aesthetic object according to their own preconceptions, and then at another time resists the projection of readers' preconceptions. The fact that the speakers, following the Gricean (1975) maxim of informativeness, leave gaps of information to be filled by addressees implies that discourse interpretation is a dialectical process of matching and assessing the fit of speaker and hearer presuppositions. The study of the role of presuppositions in literary processing is an inquiry into the relation between textual structure and selection of reader knowledge, and the combination of this knowledge with textual elements to construct literary representation.

The focus of this study relates particularly to reader accessibility to implicit textual information, epistemic and cultural distance between the reader and the text, cognitive processing, fictional worlds, multiple representations for texts, authorised interpretation and author intention, and communication failure. It is obvious that such concerns require multi-disciplinary awareness. There is the need to ascertain how presupposition relates to fictional worlds, how the text constrains reader response and how the human mind resists the text, and even tends to overlay textual structures with its own pre-existing frames and structures of thought. I will therefore proceed with this chapter by making reviews of basic philosophical literature on presupposition and possible worlds; and then, drawing on pragmatic, psychological, cultural, and critical literature account for that tension which results in the integration

of reader predispositions and textual elements in the construction of literary representation.

2.2. Presupposition, possible and fictional worlds

The twin notions of presupposition and possible worlds have their origin in the philosophical quest with truth, existence and non-existence. They may be traced to Frege's (1892/1952) initial puzzlement with meaningful expressions which did not refer even though their use implicated/presupposed their existence. The immediate consequence of this puzzlement was the postulation of truth value gap, unaccounted for by classical bivalence, and the development of the idea of presupposition. My interest here is in underlining the generation of the theory of possible worlds as part of the general inquiry into presupposition phenomena, and in the analysis of its appropriation by literary theorists and transformation into the idea of "fictional worlds," to argue the integration of literary theory and pragmatics as a long standing practice in philosophical inquiry.

2.2.1. Possible worlds, fictional worlds and incompleteness of worlds

The theory of possible worlds was originally developed to solve problems of formal semantics (Ryan 1992). It was derived from the philosophical intuition that things could have been otherwise than they are. The logical purpose was to formulate semantics of modal operators, i.e. develop semantics for describing non-actual states. Fodor (1979) applied possible world theory to the descriptive study of sentences suffering from reference failure. She thought presupposition study of truth-value gaps and the study of the ontology of possible worlds in the work on modal logic followed similar trends in the way they conceptualised propositions about nonexistent individuals and states of affairs. She proposed that there is a universe of worlds, one of which is the real world; and to say that the king of France does not exist is to say there is no king of France in the real world. But since the existence of

the king of France is possible, there is a king of France in at least one possible unreal world. Fodor recognised the similarity in her use of possible world ontology and how people talk about fictional individuals. Her treatment of the subject could be viewed as foregrounding a particular way in which a purely philosophical analysis of reality, being and existence may be helpful to the analysis of literary phenomenon. She notes that even though Winnie the Pooh does not inhabit the real world, there is a nonreal world created by the author of fable, in which Winnie the Pooh does exist. It is in this nonreal world that questions on truth and falsity about the character may be evaluated.

Ronen (1994:19) has recently noted how philosophical investigation into the nature of existence and reference has allowed literary theorists to begin to use concepts derived from philosophical logic in general and the framework of possible worlds in particular to deal with fictional reality. She observes that the conceptual frame of possible worlds seems to offer a new outlook on the problem of fictionality, the ontology of fictional world and fictional objects, and on general problems such as realism. The adaptation of possible worlds to imaginary worlds created by literary texts is not a metaphysical distortion but a vindication of the modal structure of existence (Dolezel 1995). Pavel (1983) believes that the use of possible world concepts in literary theory opens the debate on truth value in discourse, the relation between fictional world and the real world, the problem of reference in literary discourse and the problem of representation. The use of non-actualised possible worlds of modal systems gives recognition to literary works as world constructing structures, which have special illocutionary forces in virtue of which possible worlds are called into existence in the form of semiotic objects (c.f. Poggi 1998).

There are, however, clear ontological differences between possible worlds and fictional worlds. As Ronen (1994:7) demonstrates, fictional worlds can be perceived as possible worlds only when we ignore the logico-semantic features of possible worlds. According to her, possible world semantics and fictional world poetics are motivated differently. She indicates that possible world theory was basically meant to exclude fiction from logic, while fictional world theory integrates fiction into the

broader fields of non-actual worlds. Possible worlds, as a modal logic, abstracts categories which are restricted by logical possibility, which may contain empty sets; fictional worlds, on the other hand, are concrete phenomena with worlds understood quite literally. Logically, while possible worlds are not possible but in analogous derivative, in contradictory relation with the world, theorists of fictional worlds are interested in the world as a parallel ontology of fiction – fictional facts do not relate to what could/could not have occurred, but what did/could have occurred in fiction. Ronen also mentions differences between possible worlds and fictional worlds in the degree of tolerance to impossibilities. She explains that while possible worlds does not tolerate impossibilities, violations of the law of the excluded middle; these are common in fictional worlds. Possible worlds and fictional worlds differ in the understanding of transworld identity and accessibility. Ronen reminds us that possible worlds does not entail existence of independent autonomous domains; thus with fictional worlds accessibility is viewed as involving what we know about the world and what fiction tells us.

Ronen's presentation may be seen as forming part of the effort made in the literature to project fictional worlds as a type of nonreal world distinct from possible worlds. Fodor herself demonstrated an awareness of these differences in her references to the so-called incompleteness of possible worlds. Fodor (1979:205) called this "thin fiction" of possible worlds². There is always something paradoxical with possible worlds: they may be seen as over-specific worlds and then at the same time be seen as under-specified worlds. Werth (1993:70/71) talks about possible worlds as model theoretic logics tailor-made for single propositions and concerned only with how those truth conditions stated in the sentence will come out right. This makes them over-specific. On the other hand, possible worlds are under-specified because the sentences they are used to analyse cannot be evaluated for anything like functional or psychological implications. Fodor illustrates the idea of thin fiction by pointing out that if we permit worlds to be incompletely specified then we can say for the

² Burton-Roberts (1989b:212) criticises the idea of thin fiction fictions by arguing that Fodor confuses incompletely specified worlds with incomplete worlds and argues that no world can be incomplete. B-R characteristically at this point multiplies distinctions without the caution of Occam's razor. He meant to argue against the idea of truth value failure, which underlies Fodor's use of possible worlds and his rejection of "thin fictions" was just part of it.

sentence “The king of France is bald”, that there is just one nonreal world which contains a king of France and it is unspecified for almost everything except his existence, and unspecified for things like his age, marital status, tastes, actions, as well as for the properties, and even the number of individuals who inhabit the same world. Possible worlds can therefore be characterised as incomplete worlds.

Clearly, however, the term “incompleteness” has two senses in the literature. When Fodor talks about possible worlds being incomplete she means they cannot be expanded with additions through inference and other forms of interpretation. Literary theorists on the other hand talk about the “incompleteness” of fictional worlds and the “completeness” of possible worlds. By that distinction they are referring to the specificity of the possible world and the lack of specificity of the fictional world. Philosophical possible worlds are supposed to be complete state of affairs with every proposition either true or false; fictional worlds are incomplete in their lack of determination as to truth or falsity. There is an undecidability with fictional worlds which makes it resist closure³ i.e. makes it difficult to assign truth values to particular statements. This undecidability makes fictional worlds amenable to expansion through various forms of pragmatic inferences. This may be the reason for Werth’s (1993; 1997) claim for “rich text worlds”, which are not defined by semantic content of a single proposition under scrutiny, but rather by the semantic and pragmatic content of the whole discourse.

Obviously, the discourse on incompleteness, undecidability or lack of specificity of fictional worlds underlines the pragmatic concerns of fictional worlds theorists. It is the incompleteness of the act of fictional creation that invites the reader to enter into the dialogic interaction with the text in the processes of fictional determination. Adopting the Carnapian test of incompleteness, Dolezel (1995:201) concludes that texts, being finite, should necessarily produce incomplete worlds. Whenever the author (complying with pragmatic maxims) decides to omit something, a gap is created. Dolezel sounds overtly Gricean when he notes that a fictional text is a complex of explicit and implicit texture since every linguistic act implies unsaid

³ Pavel (1983) on the hand has argued for a principle of text closure which prevents fictional worlds from being crowded with elements not alluded to in the text.

meanings, and that textual meaning is a composite of overt and covert semantic constituents. According to Dolezel, the importance of implicitness in literature explains why literary interpretation is primarily the recovery of implicit meaning. The explicitness/implicitness function of texts expands the range of fictional truths beyond paraphrases of sentences, allowing fictional characters to be reconstructed by such devices as presuppositions and allusions (Ryan 1992).

The theme being pursued here is that the literary theorists who have attempted to translate the philosophical notion of possible worlds into the literary concept of fictional worlds have had to grapple with the same distinctions between explicit and inexplicit linguistic meaning which have engaged pragmatics since Grice (1957). Dolezel (1995; 1998) uses Carnap's intention/extension dichotomy to postulate an intensional function, which is a global regularity of texture that affects the microtexture of fictional worlds. The intensional function establishes a determinate link between the world and the text, making it complete and specific. Incompleteness is a function of the fictional worlds' extensional properties. Dolezel's extension (see Poggi 1998 for a review) depends on the modality of knowledge, ignorance and belief – what the agent believes, knows, is ignorant of to be the case in the world. Intension meaning is neutral; it is on the level of extension that aesthetic meaning is achieved. Structuring of a text's intension and extension stratify fictional worlds into a determinate foreground and an indeterminate background⁴.

It is obvious that presupposition, whose explication Fodor (1979) had to turn to possible worlds theory, is implicated in the completeness of possible worlds, and the incompleteness that has been identified in the literature as characteristic of fictional worlds. While it may not be problematic to characterise Dolezel's intentional world by simply using logical formula and recursive rules, to reconstruct his extensional world of the fictional text could be more complicated. Readers may have to draw upon their own repertoire of knowledge and beliefs to make determinate what has

⁴ There is no doubt that these distinctions can be seen as matching directly onto the Gricean (1957) distinction between "what is said" and "what is meant", which is generally held to be the distinction between semantic and pragmatic representation.

been left indeterminate by the text; and the nature of determination may vary from reader to reader. Presupposition therefore plays an ambivalent role in discourse structure and interpretation; and this ambivalence has both theoretical and empirical interests to the present inquiry. To pursue these interests, it is necessary to pay some attention to the specific ways in which presupposition makes the text explicitly specified, and therefore objective and determinate, and then gets the text grossly underspecified and therefore indeterminate and subjective.

2.3. Presupposition and indeterminacy

The two features which render pragmatic presupposition not amenable to logical or mathematic treatment: speaker property and shared common ground assumptions obviously make the notion identifiable with Dolezel's extensional world rather than with his intentional world. This identification requires that there be parity of communication between speakers and hearers, or between authors and readers; and this determines the extent to which speakers and hearers may converge on a common understanding of the linguistic exchange. When it became obvious that logical models could not capture the changeable and non monotonic inference type, which is presupposition, it was Stalnaker's (1974) pragmatic proposals and his idea of Common Ground which offered the most feasible paradigm for the treatment of the relation. Presupposition analysis was meant to capture what went beyond the determinate structure of the text and, crucially, rather depended on the cognitive states of interlocutors in the linguistic exchange. In this section I intend drawing on aspects of the literature on common ground and context to demonstrate that sharedness in presupposition discourse does not imply convergence of assumptions, and that the pervading indeterminacy generated by presuppositions is central to the multiplicity of meaning that especially characterises literary communication.

2.3.1. Speaker and common ground conceptions of presupposition

Strawson (1964:237) used the logic of speaker presumption of knowledge in the possession of the hearer to distinguish between what the speaker would assert and what they would presuppose. Following Stalnaker and Kamp, van Rooy (2004) notes that we presuppose not only something about the subject matter of conversation, but also about the conversation situation itself. He indicates that the most important kind of information about the conversation situation that agents presuppose is the information that other agents presuppose about the conversation situation. This analysis of presupposition has attracted criticism for equating the notion with common knowledge and thereby predicting that participants in a conversation will presuppose that they presuppose the same thing. Abbott (2000) notes that there is a widespread view that the concept of presupposition can be assimilated into the pragmatic concept of background information, shared/mutual knowledge or common ground, and that this view began with Stalnaker's (1974) paper "Pragmatic Presuppositions". In fact, even in "Pragmatics" (1973:447) Stalnaker defined presuppositions as background assumptions which may be used without being spoken. In the 1974 paper Stalnaker used the same formulation which Lewis (1969) had used to define the mutual knowledge construct, to define presupposition.

A presupposition P is a pragmatic presupposition of a speaker in a given context just in case that the speaker assumes or believes that P and assumes or believes his addressee assumes or believes that P and assumes or believes that his addressee recognizes that he is making these assumptions or has these beliefs (Stalnaker 1974:200).

Stalnaker (1978) describes common ground in terms of discourse context, which is a set of possible worlds recognised by the speaker to be 'live options' relevant to the conversation. A proposition is presupposed if it is true in all possible worlds. Stalnaker however realised that each participant in a conversation has his/her own context set, and that interlocutors may be using defective context sets with non-converging assumptions. A non-defective context set is one in which the

presuppositions of all the participants in the conversation are the same. Stalnaker suggested that a defective context set is unstable and that participants will tend to adjust its equilibrium position as they interpret purposes and content of what is said in terms of their own presuppositions; but any unnoticed discrepancies between the presuppositions of speakers and hearers are likely to lead to failure in communication. Stalnaker held the view that since communication is the point of the enterprise, everyone will have the motive to keep their presuppositions the same. And because in course of a conversation many clues are dropped about what is presupposed, participants will normally be able to tell that the divergences do exist if they do. This is the common ground view of presupposition which has come under much criticism primarily because of the likelihood of a regress, which makes presupposition look just like the notion of mutual knowledge (Schiffer 1972), and also because of the unlikelihood of common ground accounting for presuppositions being used in informative contexts.

The apparent linking of presupposition with mutual knowledge was an attempt to construe the inference implicated by the relation as explicit and determinate to participants in the linguistic exchange. The notion of mutual knowledge is a psychological construct proposed to account for how a listener tries to understand what a speaker says on some occasion. Clark and his colleagues (e.g. Clark and Carlson 1981; Clark and Marshal 1981; Clark and Schaefer 1987; Schober and Clark 1989; Clark 1996) have tried to demonstrate the psychological validity of mutual knowledge in comprehension. They characterize the idea as knowledge, beliefs and suppositions which the speaker and hearer share. While the mutual knowledge construct does not aim at characterising linguistically coded meaning, it attempts to account for extralinguistic information which interlocutors are supposed to share with each other. Mutual knowledge is meant to provide conversation partners with the 'private key' with which to conceal utterances from overhearers. For Clark and colleagues, conversation participants collaborate to arrive at a mutual belief for each reference to make sure that the addressee has reached the intended reference correctly. There is, within the mutual knowledge construct, an underlying assumption of convergence of mental states between discourse participants to

facilitate perfect comprehension, and this has attracted much criticism. Sperber and Wilson (1982; 1986/95) reject the notion for its mutuality of knowledge, which is not only shared but also known to be shared and known to be known to be shared. While not disputing the idea of sharedness in human communication, Sperber and Wilson think that communication is too risky to arrive at perfect comprehension, which the mutual knowledge idea presupposes.

The other problem with linking the common ground view of presupposition and mutual knowledge is highlighted by the recognition (in for example, Sternberg 2001; Abbot 2000; Delin 1995) of the informative use of presuppositions. Delin (1995) points out that it is observed in presupposition literature that presupposed information frequently appears in contexts where that information is not satisfied, that is, not known to be shared. For this reason she argues that presupposition should not be equated with shared knowledge since whatever is presupposed does not need to be shared. Delin submits that there are cases in which it is obviously unlikely that the hearer has any idea about the content of a presupposition. Presupposition is not dependent on or affected by whether or not a speaker can assume that the hearer already knows or has access to the information. Presupposition can stand on more or less any relationship with preceding discourse or discourse situation, subject to various coherence constraints that operate on individual constructions. Presuppositions are conveyed regardless of whether the hearer/ reader is assumed by the speaker/writer to be aware of the presupposed information or currently thinking of it or able to infer it. Delin expresses the belief that the assumptions about the current state of the hearer's model of discourse or knowledge in general are quite irrelevant to the appearance of presuppositions in discourse. It seems therefore that Stalnaker's attempt to explicate presupposition in terms of Common Ground lacks empirical validity.

It should be noted however, that Stalnaker did not intend the 1974 formulation of presupposition to be taken as a definition or analysis but as a first approximation of the notion. Stalnaker had another view of presupposition, which he characterized in

terms of speaker dispositions. In "Assertion" (1978) Stalnaker defines presupposition as

A proposition is presupposed if the speaker is disposed to act as if he assumes or believes that the proposition is true, and as if he assumes or believes that his audience assumes or believes that it is true as well.

Simons (2002:5) notes that the dispositional characterisation provides a solution to two problems which the simpler background information characterisation could not handle: (i) the speaker need not believe in the presuppositions of the sentences, and (ii) the speaker need not believe that presuppositions are actually taken for granted or are common beliefs. Consequently, according to Simons, Stalnaker reduces sentence presuppositions to epistemic, language independent properties determined by the internal states of speakers. Also, sentence presuppositions impose no constraints on common ground or even on common dispositions of speaker and his/her audience. Even though in "Common Ground" (2002), Stalnaker still defines speaker presupposition as those propositions s/he believes to be in common ground, he makes a more precise formulation of Common Ground, which he now defines in terms of common beliefs about what is accepted. He proposes that for a speaker to presuppose p is for him/her to believe that s/he accepts p and to believe that it is common belief that everybody accepts p . With this definition, Stalnaker avoids the charge of regress since no one actually needs to believe p . Speakers may have false beliefs of common ground and presuppose what they should not.

The Stalnakerian view of presupposition therefore does not predict a complete convergence of beliefs between discourse participants. Presuppositions of participants match only in the ideal context, and in the defective context, participants may or may not engage in the processes of repair (Schegloff 1979). The consequence of this view for the understanding of the interpretation of texts, as Simons (2002:9) has noted, is that readers interpret purposes and intents of what is said in terms of their own presuppositions, and these unnoticed discrepancies in turn lead to communicative failure. Simons explains that in the conversation situation the entire process of interpretation is driven only indirectly by the presupposition requirements of the sentence uttered. The addressee's knowledge of these

requirements leads him to believe that the speaker has certain presuppositions. If he does not share those presuppositions then a general interest in removing the defectiveness of the context leads him to do one of two things: either get the speaker to change his/her presuppositions or change his/her own. Simons points out that crucially these changes are not required in order to satisfy the presupposition requirements of the original utterance, i.e. that the presuppositions of the utterance be entailed by the contents of common ground. These requirements are satisfied by the internal state of the speaker. The pragmatic view of presupposition therefore does not preclude indeterminacy even in ordinary exchange of face-to-face conversation. When it comes to written communication the potential for variances in participants' assumptions is enormous and may on several occasions lead to communication failure.

2.3.2. Indeterminacy and text interpretation

The theme of determinacy and indeterminacy, specificity and non-specificity of linguistic expression and meaning representation, which we have found to be central in presupposition and possible worlds discourse, may actually be found to characterise all discourse on text and interpretation in general. The idea of mutuality of knowledge, whose use in presupposition analysis sought to make the relation determinate and explicit, was meant by its promoters, especially by Clark and his colleagues, to offer a general framework by which discourse participants could always arrive at a single correct interpretation to an utterance. However, Brown (1995) has reminded us that everyday language, particularly that which relates to familiar procedures in the real world may be intended by the speaker to have specific interpretations; if they are not interpreted as intended, the speaker will see that something is going wrong, and there is the possibility of identifying and redefining the erroneous interpretation. But as language moves away from short exchanges which relate to the here and now, to more abstract and complex genres, opportunities for misunderstanding tend to multiply, or that there is a wider range of justifiable readings. In the interpretation of such extended texts, readers' assumptions about the presupposition requirements of the discourse context may not match those of the

author, and there may be differences from one reader to another.

2.3.2.1. Hermeneutics and philosophical treatment of indeterminacy

The search for correct reading of texts has long been part of the hermeneutic project. As Grassie (1997:3) has indicated, the hermeneutic reading considered the text as radically influenced by the author's intentional constructions but also as having its own independence from the author and containing meanings independent of the author's intentions as is reflected in the personal psychological and socio-cultural presuppositions in which the author unconsciously lives and writes. The reader also has personal psychological and socio-cultural presuppositions that radically influence how the text is read and understood. Grassie observes that structural hermeneutics sought to understand the text independent of the author, or to understand the author's intentions better than they were understood by the author himself. It was in this that the structuralists believed that they possessed some critical theory that rendered correct reading knowable. On the other hand, Ricoeur (e.g. 1976; 1986) has distinguished fundamentally different interpretive paradigms for written text and spoken dialogue. Written texts differ from verbal interchange in being detached from the original circumstances which produced it, the intention of the author is distant, the addressee is general rather than specific and ostensive references are absent. As Mallery et al (1994) have noted a key idea in Ricoeur's view is that once objective meaning is released from the subjective intentions of the author, multiple meanings become possible. Thus meaning is not just generated from the author's world-view but also according to its significances in the reader's world-view. In other words, with the processing of written texts, the reader's presuppositions may vary from those of the author, and also from those of other readers.

2.3.4.2. Literary theory and text interpretation

It may be suggested that when Miall (1989) argued that literary texts do not exhibit stable meanings, and that no networks of relationships and inferences will capture the indeterminacy of the literary text with its complex of shifting and continually

developing meanings, he must have had in mind the lack of convergence between reader and author presuppositions or the differences that are commonly found with the presuppositions of readers who might be processing the same literary text. It seems then that when it comes to literary processing the quest for a convergence between author and reader presuppositions in a common ground, in the sense of mutual knowledge, is an elusive one. But whether or not author and reader presuppositions and the common ground, that establishes matched assumptions between them, could be of any consequence to literary processing depends on the theory of literariness that the analyst holds and what assumptions that theory makes about literary meaning. I will, at this point, briefly review the respective positions of formalist/new critics and constructivists on literariness in the attempt to assess what could be the significance of presupposition and common ground to the study of literary processing.

Formalist approaches to literature consider literariness intrinsic to certain types of texts. Literariness for them is completely a linguistic phenomenon. Literary texts have certain characteristics and patterns which set them apart from non-literary texts (see Enkvist 1994:47; van Peer 1991). Drawing extensively on the Russian formalist Mukarovsky and the Czech structuralist, Shklovsky, Miall and his colleagues (e.g. Miall 1989; 1998a; 1998b; Miall & Kuiken 1994; 1998a; 1998b) identify literariness formally: as significant deviations from non-literary prose. They insist that literariness is in the way a text is written, its unusualness, its transformation of the familiar; and they consider defamiliarisation as the hallmark of literariness. They point out that for the formalists, the technique of art is to make objects “unfamiliar”, to make forms difficult; to increase the difficulty and length of perception is an aesthetic end. The departures from the normal language, phonemic, grammatical and semantic, call attention to textual form, i.e. foregrounds the literary expression. They argue that foregrounding occurs randomly in ordinary discourse but in literary discourse it is structured, systematic and hierarchical. Foregrounding enables poetic language to achieve maximum intensity and present meaning with intricacy and complexity. The deautomatising effects of foregrounding enable the literary text to retain its identity and uniqueness.

As Juvan (2000) has noted, literary scholarship to the formalist is to find out what the “essence” of literature may be, what discriminates texts deemed literary from other forms of communication, to the exclusion of the historical, biological, sociological or psychological effects that may be related to literature. The point is that the formalists do not consider literary meaning a consequential object of study. The new critics, who paralleled the formalists in the Anglo-Saxon world, considered literary works to be works of art, and art was not simply a reflection of the world. As Sell (1994:223) indicates, the new critics did not consider literary writers as engaged in communicating their perceptions or opinions, so their readers were not interested in what they were saying. Miall (1998:2) asks the question, “Who needs yet another account of the meaning of *Hamlet* or *Wuthering Heights*?” He argues that the dominant focus on the meaning and value of literary texts has served to misrepresent the nature of literature, and he proposes that “literary texts are not read to extract, record, or elaborate the ideas they contain”.

It seems reader identity does not make the slightest difference for the formalist, whilst it makes a world of difference for the constructivist. In the first place, the formalist assumption that textual features have fixed and stable meanings (Hanauer 1997:159) predicts the objectivity of literary meaning. Miall (1998a) does not offer any role to the reader per se; it is the distinctive literary devices which evoke distinctive inferential processing, feeling and enriched mode of response. It seems therefore that author intentions and presuppositions and the historical and cultural context of the creation of the literary work are not of any importance in the formalist reading process. The reading process envisaged by the formalist theory is completely ahistorical. Miall & Kuiken (1998:3/4) suggest that psychological components involved in reading are species specific and universal. In a paper entitled “An evolutionary approach to literary reading: theory and predictions”, Miall (1998b) speaks of the invariant laws of literary culture and the processes which the formal properties of literature initiate. Literary reading, according to him, needs neither conscious awareness nor understanding of the goals of literary reading. He argues,

(A) reader for example does not need knowledge of phonetic tone colours, or even need to be aware of their role during reading; despite all this, the phonemic response promotes "context sensitive" processes ... endowed on her by evolution...(Miall 1998b:3)

The factor which becomes clear with the formalist theory is that literary processing is purely on the linguistic/computational level, nothing on the conceptual level; it is wholly automatic, excluding any form of intentionality or reader variability. It is even implied that readers can engage with linguistic structure without paying any attention to semantic content. The formalist theory therefore has no use for either author or reader presupposition, or for the common ground that gets constructed between them in the context of literary interaction.

Juvan (2000:2) observes that since the 1960s there have been a number of anti-essentialist movements who have submitted the totalising claims of formalism to postmodern deconstruction. Generally the anti-essentialists find the practice of defining literariness in terms of textual features inadmissible (see Sell 1994; Enkvist 1991:23; Eagleton 1983; Fish 1989). The tendency is for theorists to define literariness not in terms of texts but as a certain type of processing (see Hoffstaedter 1987:57). The non-essentialising tendencies may be exemplified by constructivist assumptions about literariness and literary meaning.

Schmidt (1982; 1989) seems to be the leading exponent of the constructivist literary theory. As de Beaugrande (1989) observes, Schmidt eschews attempts to isolate something specific 'in' literature, such as distinctive features, deviations from ordinary language, special topics and subject matter or accumulation of rhetorical devices or tropes and schemes. He defines 'literature' as an abstract idea and literary text as a concrete object, but the constitutive conditions of 'literary communication' as a human activity. Constructivists regard all texts as artefacts with indeterminate communicative status until someone applies relevant conventions to them. The point is that the seemingly obviousness of literature is a complex product of socialisation. Schmidt introduces two conventions to explain the literary process: aesthetic and polyvalence conventions. The aesthetic convention de-emphasises the fact convention, expands action beyond true/false and useful/useless. The polyvalence

convention frees text producers from being bound to the mono-valence convention; text receivers have the freedom to produce different communication from the same text in different times and situations. They are free from conventional pressure to resolve competing meanings into a single reasonable determinate one.

The constructivist theory stands in opposition to formalism in every way. Firstly, the attention given to fictionality and potentially available alternative world models by the aesthetic convention underlines the theory's engagement with conceptual structure in literary processing. Secondly, the polyvalence convention focuses on the domain of social action (Schmidt 1989:264) of the literary process. The emphasis is on the situatedness and the historicity of meaning making. The theory predicts that readers have the freedom to produce different meanings from the same text at different times and in different situations, and this in turn gives recognition to the context of literary processing and background assumptions readers bring to bear on the text. Reader knowledge systems, presuppositions and differences in assumptions as to what the author's intentions might have been, lead to variability in the common ground which should link participants in the literary interaction.

It seems obvious that the constructivist view of literariness has a lot to contribute to the theoretical needs of this study even though no one can really gloss over its obvious inadequacies.⁵ There are indeed problems with both the formalist and constructivist conceptions of literature. Juvan (2000) clearly shows that literature cannot be ontologically defined solely on linguistic criteria, pointing out that Aristotle, for instance, did not find stylistic and formal structures sufficient for defining literature since he also introduced the criteria of significance, which concerned fictional and polyvalent content. Neither does the rhetoric of the constructivist explain the basis for consensus on works that are generally classified as literary – the canon for instance. What is needed is a synthesis, a normative view of literariness which avoids the inadequacies of either theory. In this study, I will

⁵ The constructivists seem to share with Fish the idea of complete reader control of meaning construction with no legitimate textual control. Reading under such circumstances cannot be said to be interactive or communicative; it can only be a process of self production and narcissism. Neither can the Formalist reading process be communicative since the reader is entirely passive, consigned only to recovering textually determined meanings.

work with the idea of literariness espoused by systemic theorists of literature, which recognises both the linguistic and convention basis of literariness. As Juvan has indicated, literariness as a convention evolved along the canon of representative texts. Literariness, according to this view, refers to historically, socially and culturally differentiated convention, derived from the immanent characteristics of some of the classic paradigmatic texts of the literary canon⁶. The systemic view of literariness should locate literary processing at the point on the continuum of linguistic interaction where single correct meanings are elusive because multiple forms of meanings become valid. There is need to give recognition to the ontological validity of the presuppositions of both the author and the reader and to understand that text interpretation is a situation of tension during which the reader makes the effort to match his/her presuppositions and background assumptions to those of the author in the attempt to establish a common ground of literary interaction between them.

2.4. Recovering the implicit in discourse

While in the previous section the attention was on how presupposition contributes to the implicitness and indeterminacy of texts, the attention now is on how presupposition may influence text structure, direct hearer attention to speaker intention and channel hearer interpretive resources towards the construction of particular discourse meanings. I will focus specifically on issues relating to the role of presupposition in discourse partitioning, background knowledge, and the link between culture, knowledge and texts.

2.4.1. The explicit and implicit in presupposition

The rejection of the mutual knowledge view of common ground does involve a refusal to countenance the possibility of reader and author presuppositions

⁶ The duality of this view has much in common with Iser's literary theory, which recognises the prior existence of both the text and the reader, and construes the reading process as a kind of tension between the two which leads to the creation of the aesthetic object.

converging to form a common ground of interaction. Iser (1974; 1978) speaks of textual features which guide reader response. The ambivalence of the presupposition is in the fact it can lead to the uncovering of the author's presuppositions and intentionality while at the same time lead to a concealment of those presuppositions and intentions. In this section I look at how textual and pragmatic features of discourse may lead to recoverability of underlying speaker assumptions.

2.4.1.1. The given/new partitioning of texts

Strawson (1950) initially used the diagnosis of informative intent on the part of the speaker to distinguish between presupposition and assertion. In a later paper, (1964) he used the discourse function of the textual constituent to distinguish between these two notions. While presupposition is low on the scale of informativeness, it is high on the scale of topical discourse function. Linguistic theories which ultimately refer back to Mathesius' (1929/83) distinction of discourse structure into 'theme' and rheme', claim an existence of a pragmatic partition within the clause⁷. Discourse information is not merely an unstructured set of propositions. Speakers tend to form their utterances so as to structure what they are attempting to convey in accordance to their beliefs about the hearer's knowledge (Prince 1986).

While Strawson's distinctions give recognition to the functional and informative structuring of discourse, work on the pragmatics of information structure is generally based on the "given-new" distinction, i.e. on the degree to which information is assumed to be available to the hearer prior to its evocation. Chafe (1974; 1976; 1984) for instance, makes use of the "given-new" distinction, and defines them as either information which the speaker assumes to be in the consciousness of the hearer, or information the speaker introduces into the addressee's consciousness.

⁷ Steedman & Kruijff-Korbayova (2001:2) have indicated that every work on information structure makes use of definitions that have some elements in common, drawing on at least one of the following distinctions:

- (i) a "topic/comment" or "theme/rheme" distinction between the part of the utterance that relates to the purpose of the discourse and that part which advances the discourse;
- (ii) a "given/new" distinction between parts of the utterance content that the context treats as available to all and those parts that are not available to all.

Ward and Birner (2004) also limit themselves to the informative dimension when they note that the felicitous use of given information requires that the constituent represents discourse old information, while the felicitous use of new information requires that the constituents represent less familiar information in the discourse. Obviously, these researchers use only one dimension of the two-dimensional information structure, implicit in Strawson's distinctions.

Gundel (1988; 1999; 2003), on the other hand, recognises two logically independent senses of 'givenness', which she refers to a 'referential givenness' and 'relational givenness'. Referential givenness for her, is the relationship between linguistic expression and the corresponding non-linguistic (conceptual) entity in the model of the speaker/hearer's mind, the discourse, some real or possible world. The parameter is that the entity should already exist in the model and to some degree be salient. Relational givenness involves the partition of the semantic/conceptual representation of a sentence into two complementary parts: X and Y, where X is what the sentence is about and Y is what is predicated about X. Gundel indicates that the relational X and Y and the referential givenness operate on different levels of representation; she therefore attempts to define relational givenness as something independent of the speaker's assumptions about the hearer's knowledge or attentional state. There is therefore a split between the discourse situation and the mental states of discourse participants.

Halliday (1967; 1985), who applies the two dimensions in his handling of discourse structure treats them as if they were orthogonal to each other. He makes a distinction between information structure and thematic structure. His information structure involves the constituents 'given' and 'new', while his thematic structure, involves the constituents 'topic' and 'comment'. In the Hallidayan system, the encoder uses given information to bring the hearer's attention to some elements of shared/mutual knowledge that s/he wants to talk about. The information focus expresses the main point of the information unit, i.e. what the speaker is representing as news. Halliday's 'topic' represents the initial part of the sentence, (what the speaker wants to talk about). The 'comment' is the rest of the sentence and represents what the

speaker wants to say about the chosen topic. It seems however that Halliday does not entirely ignore the possibility that the different distinctions he uses may actually be different aspects of a single level of structure. His system recognises a parallel equivalence between 'given' and 'topic', and 'new' and 'comment'. On one hand, an entity must acquire a high level of givenness to function as a topic; on the other hand, an expression must carry the highest degree of newly introduced (relevant) information in order to be felicitously used as a comment. It seems therefore that the pragmatic theories could easily adapt to the distinctions Strawson made and therefore recognise the same forms and functions within discourse structure.

Considering the above analysis, there seems to be good motivation to map the Strawsonian presupposition/assertion distinction directly onto the pragmatic distinction between given and new information, in the sense that what is presupposed in an utterance is given information, which is being treated as though it were familiar, or part of common ground, while what is asserted in an utterance is being treated as new to the addressee⁸. There is some validity in the claim that while presupposed or given information is what anchors current discourse to prior discourse, new information provides a current update for prior discourse. As Prince (1981) notes, the idea of focus marking new information relies on the premise that what is given is recoverable from previous discourse. Glanzberg (2002) has observed that the same premise lies behind the idea of focus as what is new in Halliday (1967). Gricean principles of cooperative communication require the speaker not to assert, but presuppose information they assume to be recoverable from prior discourse. Fauconnier (2000) has linked presupposition with general cognition. He notes that the study and modelling of cognition has revealed that language is at the tip of the cognitive iceberg, which gets entailed to links and networks of meaning. The tip of the cognitive iceberg is the new information, whose felicitous

⁸ There is no assumption here that only given or old information can be presupposed or that all new information should be asserted since the key point in this formulation is that the entity *is being treated as if* it is either old or new information, not that *it is* given or new information. This intuition avoids Lambrecht's (1994) direct assimilation of "old information" into presupposition and "new information" into assertion. This apparent confusion has resulted in Abbot's (1999) and Delin's (1995) protestations. The mapping is undeniable even in Hajicova & Vbrova's (1982) definition of given-new in terms of context bound (cb) and non-context bound (nb) information. Recall Stalnaker's view that a sentence's presuppositions are entailed by the context of interpretation.

use requires that its presuppositions be satisfied by the discourse context. The point is that the speaker will not put any information into the implicit structure of a presupposition if they cannot assume that such information is recoverable from the discourse context. It is this recoverability of presupposed information which ensures that both speaker and hearer presuppositions may converge to form the common ground for the discourse.

2.4.1.2. The figure/ground structuring of texts

By defining presupposition in terms of entailments of *A* which are also the entailments of $\sim A$, Strawson (1950) and other logicians (e.g. Burton-Roberts 1993/7) made the truth of presuppositions undeniable without the risk of contradiction⁹. Early “pragmatic” theories (e.g. Karttunen 1974; Soames 1982) regarded presuppositions as either uncontroversial propositions or as felicity/sincerity conditions. Lewis’s (1979) “accommodation” can be seen as a form of coercion to treat a proposition as if it was present in common ground when in fact they do not obtain in common ground. Speakers are committed to the truth of their presuppositions and they expect their audiences also to be so committed. The propensity of presupposition to constrain hearers to behave as if they share the perspective of speakers is therefore well known. But it is the “given/new” dichotomy and its mapping onto the presupposition/assertion distinction that makes the stance taking effect of presuppositions clearly analysable.

Underlying the Clark & Haviland’s (1977) “given-new contract” is the assumption that cooperative utterances should mark what is taken to be new and what is taken to be given. In this kind of contract, sentences are partitioned into ground and focus. Glanzberg (2002) implies that the attempt to map focus onto new information and ground onto given information is a long standing practice in pragmatic theory. In their attempt to show how discourse interpretation relates to background and

⁹ It is the logical contradiction of ‘*A and not A*’ in sentences like “I haven’t given up smoking; I have never smoked” that compelled Burton-Roberts (1989; 1993/97) to adopt Horn’s (1985; 1989) notion of metalinguistic negation to carry out a pragmatic analysis of the negation, which left the logical presupposition intact

ideology, Grundy and Jiang (1999) establish some sort of equivalence between the topic/focus distinction and the ground/figure *gestalt*. They describe figure in terms of discreteness, shape and singularity, while ground is characterised with diffuseness. They point out that we see the figure, not the ground; and that we assume that the contour which marks the boundary between the figure and the ground belongs to the figure and not to the ground against which the figure is profiled. Figures give an impression of solidity, closeness and density of colour relative to ground. The ground appears to continue uninterrupted behind the figure. It is the figure and not the ground which is remembered. However, without ground there can be no figure. Grundy and Jiang note that the figure/ground *gestalt* may focus on the intra-sentential structural properties of language and designates the foregrounded entity in the trajector/landmark profile of a number of grammatical relations, such as presupposition, which provide the ground in relation to which the rest of the sentence is seen as a figure. The point is that a speaker has the means at each point in a discourse to foreground some element of propositional meaning as figure in relation to some other elements which occur as ground.

It is generally acknowledged that the figure/ground relation implies perspectivity. Linell (2003) argues that the meaning potential of a word is a structured set of semantic resources that are used in combination with contextual factors to prompt and give rise to situated meanings. According to Linell, thinking in oppositions, and aspects, and in figure and ground relations generates perspectivity, which implies that the same data or topics could have been conceptualised otherwise. Favareau (2002) draws a line of signification linking signs and abstraction from symbols, to selection and choice, criteria for selection, and values; and then he argues that the ground provides the locus of signification suffused by a set of values. Recoverability of presuppositions, perspectivity and propositional coercion are therefore closely interlinked. Eco (1976) identifies presupposition as providing the textual perspective which obliges us to see events, characters, and concepts from a given point of view. By framing a background of implicit agreement between speaker and hearer,

presupposition coerces acceptance of a particular point of view. It is for this reason, Eco argues, that presupposition cannot be denied *de re*, only *de dicto*¹⁰.

A number of empirical studies have demonstrated how presuppositions frame interpretation and coerce acceptance of a specific point of view. Grundy and Jiang (1999) use Fauconnier's (1997; 1985) idea of mental space, to show how deictic index consisting of pragmatic material from encyclopaedia knowledge may float into 'focus space' but depends crucially on 'viewpoint space' for its interpretation. Sbisa (1999) uses an analysis of objective context to show how presuppositions facilitate ideological uptake in Italian political discourse. She argues that assertions will require that speakers give evidence for ethical and political choices and adhesion to ways of life. Her point is that such ideological views are presented in Italian newspapers as shared common sense assumptions taken for granted and therefore immune to challenge¹¹.

Schmid (2001) studied expressions of the type *the thing is that ...* or *the problem was that* which are seen as *constructions* in the Construction Grammar sense of the term and referred to as '*N-be-that-constructions*'. Deriving his material from the 225-million word British section of COBUILD's *Bank of English* corpus Schmid showed that depending on the types of nouns that they use, speakers can exploit the *N-be-that-construction* in the service of an array of presuppositions, among them existential and factive semantic ones as well as pragmatic ones. The claim Schmid makes is that presupposition functioning as the ground of the discourse imperceptibly draws into the discourse notions, beliefs, attitudes, views of life and value judgement, which otherwise may attract unease and dispute, and insures that these conceptual positions are given safe uptake without controversy.

¹⁰ Compare this to the logical notion of semantic ambiguity of negation (Seuren 1988; 1990; Martin 1979), which provided two negations, one internal, which left the presupposition intact and the other external, which denied the presupposition. The idea is that if I said "I don't regret that I invited Jean to the party", an internal analysis of the negation will leave the presupposition that I invited Jean to the party intact while an external negation will in fact deny that I invited Jean to the party and therefore dissolve the presupposition.

¹¹ Burton-Robert's (1989; 1998) revised definition of presuppositions as weak entailments of sentences make the relation undeniable, not subject to debate.

Central to Iser's (1974; 1978; 1989) literary theory is the idea of textual gaps which need filling by readers. One basic effect of these blanks of information is that they invite the reader to participate in the text in accordance with the degree to which they can access the information left blank by the text. But even more central than the mere recovery of information is the structuring of perspectivity, which results from the author's invitation to readers to contribute to the authoring of the text. Fluck (2000) has pointed out that Iserian blanks elicit a constant switching of figure and ground through which we try to compensate for the suspension of connectivity and the ensuing indeterminacy of the text. According to Fluck, as a "negating" structure, suspended in connectivity and, hence, characterized by indeterminacy, the literary text can be meaningfully processed only by a movement back and forth between figure and ground that compels the reader to look at the text from constantly reversed angles.

2.4.2. The use of background knowledge

There is general agreement, in both the psychological and linguistic literature, on the crucial role of background knowledge in the interpretation of discourse (see for instance, Singer & Hallordson 1999; Noordman and Vonk 1992; Revlin and Hergarty 1999; Werth 1999). To construct any aesthetically valid fictional world, readers have to rely on what Eco (1990) calls "encyclopaedic knowledge", i.e. general world knowledge. To infer the constituents of action and the intentions and motivations that underlie those actions we need to mobilise special compartments of our encyclopaedic knowledge (Dolezel 1995). The point about the use of reader knowledge in discourse interpretation is that it leads to variability in meaning construction. It is in this direction that presupposition, as a relation between textual structure and the reader's repertoire of experiences and knowledge may lead to lack of convergence between reader and author presuppositions and also to multiplicity of meanings. But to the extent that readers' (and authors') backgrounds enable them to share certain structures of knowledge and assumptions, textual interpretation may tend to converge. In the remaining sections of this chapter I will focus on psychological modelling of the knowledge used in comprehension, and then examine

the cultural sources of such knowledge in an attempt to account for the extent to which meaning construction may vary from reader to reader, and the extent to which reader and author presuppositions may converge.

2.4.2.1. Schema theory and background knowledge

The partition of discourse into presupposition and assertion, which our discussion has shown structures and constrains the transfer of information from the speaker to the hearer, also focuses on the discourse participants, whose assumptions and mental states are encoded in the partition. The speaker's beliefs about the knowledge in the possession of the hearer leads him/her to put some part of the discourse into an underlying implicit structure which may only be made determinate if the hearer indeed is in possession of the knowledge which the speaker assumed s/he has. Hobbs (1990) refers to the set of beliefs which the interpreter possesses as the "knowledge base", which may consist not only of true beliefs but also of opinions, values, heuristics and even false beliefs. Accordingly the belief system used by agents need not consist of statements they actually believe in, it need only be a set of propositions viewed as standing for a belief system which the reader is required to bring to bear on the text in order to interpret it. It is the belief system that constrains the range of readings that may be given to any text.

Psychologists model the knowledge base variously in terms of concepts, schemata, scripts and frames. It is helpful to model the knowledge of discourse participants as *schemata* because as a superordinate term, it encompasses several knowledge representations. Kellogg (1994) describes a schema as a mental representation of a type of object or event that describes the general characteristics that define the type. The details of specific tokens of the type in question are irrelevant and are identified as variables in the schema that assumes several values. Kellogg thinks of schemata as generating personal and consensual symbols that refer to properties of knowledge representation. There are schemata representing our knowledge about all concepts: those underlying objects, situations, events, actions, and sequences of actions. The schema summarises or represents numerous objects, events or ideas that differ in one

way or another, groups such objects and allows the mind to treat them as functionally the same. As a packaged unit of knowledge, the schema contains as part of its specification, the network of interrelations that is normally believed to hold among the constituents of the concept in question organized into hierarchies of schemata embedding other schemata. Kellogg views the schema as tacit knowledge that becomes explicit or conscious knowledge only through the generation of personal and consensual symbols of mental activity, such as writing and thinking. It is for this same reason that Rumelhart (1980) considers schemata as building blocks of cognition, the fundamental elements upon which all sensory data may be interpreted.

When Bartlett (1932) first introduced the schema theory, it was meant to account for his findings from the empirical studies he conducted on human memory. But he also realized the theory could account for human knowledge and thinking in general. Basic to Bartlett's findings, in his study of human memory, was his recognition that changes in recall protocols frequently showed the impact of old information on new information (see Brewer 2001 for a review). The recall protocols that Bartlett's subjects generated were changed in many ways from the information originally presented. The recalls were shorter, reduced only to the plan, form, type or scheme. There was always the omission of the irrelevant, the inconsistent and the unfamiliar, but there were also sometimes the curious preservation of the trivial. Bartlett also noted the transformation of the relatively unfamiliar to the relatively familiar and the addition of information that went beyond the explicit text. Bartlett noted that his subjects tended to explicitly and definitely introduce reasons into their reproductions to account for the material which had been presented without explanation.

In his discussions of the various omissions and transformations Bartlett notes that connecting a given pattern with a special setting is obviously an active process, for in the abstract sense the setting used is only one of the large number of settings, any one of which might be brought into play. However, Bartlett repeatedly insists that the process is unconscious for the observer is not aware of the search and subsequent match. He calls this fundamental process of connecting a given pattern with some setting or scheme, *effort after meaning*. As Brewer (2001) notes, the process, in

Bartlett's thinking, is not merely a question of relating newly presented material to old acquisitions of knowledge; the process of fitting is an active process depending on the pre-formed tendencies and biases, which the subject brings to the task. Bartlett's description of the schema amounts to generic information which is represented in the schema being brought to bear on the process of perception, memory and comprehension. The schema theory therefore predicts that people can interpret new information only in terms of pre-structured information they have already acquired¹².

2.4.2.2. Culture and knowledge

The moral of Bartlett's (1932) empirical study of memory was that readers filter texts through their experiences, generally forgetting details of the original text during recalls and add inferences from general knowledge. It is clear, however, that people

¹² In spite of the explanatory merits of the schema theory, critics (e.g. Thorndike & Yekovich 1980; Brewer and Nakamura 1984) have directed attention to its limitations. The theory is said to have trouble dealing with schema inconsistent material. There are problems with the theory in assuming that all memory structure consists of generic schema information. The theory is also supposed to find it difficult dealing with the structured knowledge that is used in narrative fiction. van Dijk & Kinstch (1983) maintain that the theory cannot account for understanding of text since most discourses bring in new discourse which is not just an instantiation of a stereotypical knowledge type.

In the attempt to deal with the limitations of the schema theory, some researchers have made specific proposals on how the schema theory is supposed to work. *Frames* are schemata that represent the physical structure of the environment. Minsky (1977) proposed this term in his seminal paper on the perception of complex visual scenes such as a room. Besides aiding perception, frames are clearly critical in generating mental maps and other forms of remembering and imagining. The essence of frame is a detailed structural description, which specifies the features and relations among features that define the physical setting. *Scripts* are schemata that represent routine activities. They are always sequential and often involve social interactions. Schank and Abelson (1977) described the restaurant script to illustrate this class. Each script specifies a theme (eating in a restaurant), typical roles (customer and waiter), entry conditions (hungry customer), and a sequence of sense and actions within scenes (ordering, which involves getting a menu, reading a menu and so on).

Underlying most of the criticisms of the schema theory is the assumption that schemata are rigid and fixed structures in the mind. Kellogg (1994) thinks this is a wrong assumption. He refers to Bartlett's original characterisation of schema theory, which argued against the fixed categories of associationist theories. Kellogg insists that the central point to emphasise about schemata is the flexibility they afford human behaviour. He argues that if knowledge representations are static and rigid, then the thinker who acts on the basis of them gains a little over behaving in a rote stimulus-response fashion. Human beings as creative users of symbolic systems depend very much on the use of dynamic forms of knowledge representation. What we know must be continually updated and then stretched to find application in the unique problem that faces us at any moment.

read differently not merely because of their idiosyncratic experiences but also because of factors such as cultural background, education, social class, gender and age. Emmot (1997) observes that readers whose cultural backgrounds are different from the background of the text are likely to make reconstructions and be puzzled by unfamiliar entities which make little sense because they lack general knowledge of the culture. The work of Gumperz (e.g. 1982) has shown that people who share grammatical knowledge of a language but come from different cultural backgrounds may contextualise what is read differently to the extent that different meanings are produced. Gumperz's studies reveal that members of social groups use language to reflect not only their group-based identity but also to provide indices as to what they are, what they want to communicate and how they know how to do so.

The growing sensitivity of researchers to cultural variation in cognition reflects the contemporary understanding of culture as a structure for cognition. Sperber and Hirschfield (1999) discuss culture from the point of view of classifications, schemes, models, competencies, i.e. an ensemble of representations. There seems to be a continuing shift from the Durkheimian idea of culture as consisting of the acquirement by the individual of symbols of their place in the social order. In this study therefore my use of the word "culture" will be referring to the Weberian idea of the acquirement of group processes of conferring meaning and significance on a finite segment of reality, to which they have related value out of meaningless infinity (see Zeuner 2001). This reference unifies for me the epistemic view of culture that I am making preponderant in this study. There are recent works on culture which integrate evolutionary and cognitive perspectives. Sperber (1985; 1996) has argued for an epidemiological approach to culture, according to which cultural facts are treated as mental facts distributed among human populations. The emphasis is on the sharedness, the common stock of knowledge, i.e. highly typified knowledge about the world shared by members of a community (see Grauman 1995). Writing from this position of culture as a public mode of signification, Geertz (1973) claims that

The concept of culture I espouse is a semiotic one. By believing with Max Weber that man is an animal suspended on webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it is therefore not experimental science in search of a law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning.

This view of culture goes with a strong individuation of individual cultures. Cultures are viewed not just as being different environments but as being different worlds, differing from each other in arbitrary ways.

Corollary to the epistemic view of culture is the sociogenic view of the self, summed up in Lyotard's (1984:15) words, "a self does not amount to much", reinforced by Rorty's (1989:189) when he writes, "socialisation . . . goes all the way down". Gover and Gavelek (1996) talk about the sociogenic view of human development when they refer to the assumptions that (i) the social remains primary while the individual emerges out of interaction, and (ii) the constitutive role of semiotic functions (language, signs and symbols) as embedded in human practices is generally acknowledged. According to Gover and Gavelek (1996) an important characteristic of a sociogenic metatheory is that identity is emergent only within a network of self-other relations. It is the sociogenic idea that the active, creative human subject is one that constructs social meaning and is at the same time itself a social construction. The sociogenic view extends the search for the self beyond the individual to social, cultural and historical dimensions. Gover and Gavelek seem to endorse Harre's (1983:26) definition of the *person* as

the socially defined, publicly visible embodied being, endowed with all kinds of powers and capacities for public, meaningful action.

The sociogenic view of human development has echoes in the dialogic view of the individual's cultural embeddedness and interactional interdependencies both sociohistorically and situationally. Linell (2003) argues that dialogism denies the autonomy of the individual. He talks about "inherited categories" which provide the raw materials by which individuals construct personal identities, and also of the fact that the subjective *I* is not infinitely agentic or entirely free to take any position or to construct any identity that it wishes. Instead, as the notion of dialogue implies, identity construction is a dialectical process. Linell, in his paper, argues against the premise underlying most approaches to self and identity that the nature of self-reflexive thought, affect, and action are characteristics of the individual mind. He

claims that such individualism inevitably both limits and misconstrues the dialogic thinking regarding the social, cultural, and historical constituents of these constructs.

Contemporary psychology shows growing interest in the relationship between individual and collectivity in a way that parallels the sociogenic view of human development. Herman (2001) observes that while the group¹³ is no longer treated merely as something external to the individual, contrary to traditional conceptions which defined culture as something out there, anthropologists and cultural psychologists are increasingly concerned with culture as structures and processes within the individual. Gover (1996) claims that in the sociocultural view, the border between individual and culture is not physical (as marked by the skin, for instance). Instead, a semiotic boundary, or interface, constituted by the enactment of gestures, symbols, and signs, comprises the bridge between personal identity and one's social and cultural context.

Geertz (1973) observes that there is an approach in the social sciences and anthropology which tends to analyse the relationship between the culture and the mind in quite a radical way. He notes that quite commonly the claim is not just that cultural factors affect mental activity; it is that the human mind is socially and culturally constituted. Minds, within this kind of approach, are not natural systems informed and transformed by culture, they are made by culture and differently so by different cultures. Enfield (2000) argues that the shared assumption of particular cultural ideas provides human groups with common premises for predictably convergent inferential processes. He terms this process of people collectively using effectively identical assumptions in interpreting each other's actions - i.e. hypothesizing as to each other's motivations and intention, *cultural logic*. He defines cultural logic as the interpretation of one's world using natural logical principles, and with reference to premises provided by, and usually specific to,

¹³ Adams & Markus (2001) have proposed that equating culture with group is a fundamental source of reification in the discipline of psychology. They argue that it fosters a conception of culture as a more-or-less explicit, internally homogeneous, externally distinctive, collective entity. But in the era of multiple intelligibilities and ontologies (Gergen 1996) the conception of 'group' itself has to be deconstructed and not considered a priori based on geographical boundaries. D'Maggio's (1997) idea of zones of greater and lesser intensities seems to be a plausible idea.

particular cultural settings. The idea of collective mode of thinking is strongly held in Shotter's thinking. Shotter shares the position that mental development involves the appropriation of collective practices (see Leiman 2002).

It appears contemporary thought about human development projects a deterministic view of culture and society. Archer (1999) summarises this position as

We are nothing beyond what society makes us, and it makes us what we are through our joining society's conversation¹⁴.

A pragmatic study of literary interpretation, the framework being followed in this inquiry, cannot espouse this sociocentrism in full, especially in its extreme version represented by Lyotards' and Rorty's summaries presented above. In his introductory paper, "The new interdisciplinarity" Sell (1994a) argues that to recognise that writers and readers are historically situated does not necessarily mean that the human psyche is entirely determined by socio-economic and other power structures. He maintains the same line of argument in another paper in the same volume, "Literary gossip, literary theory, literary pragmatics" (Sell 1994b). He points out that readers' interpretations may be the result of their individual knowledge and values. He clarifies his position by maintaining that

(L)iterary pragmatics does not embrace the form of cultural determinism and would argue that readers can cast aside their cultural blinkers not only in the exercise of historical imagination, but also in a personal assessment of an earlier writer's value for the present. A cultural historiography that does not leave room for such individual preferences cannot explain how changes in general taste and values are actually initiated (Sell 1994:236).

In spite of all that, Sell does concede that a reader's own period and cultural background does affect interpretations and it is one of the main tasks of literary pragmatics to trace such connections. Enkvist (1991:5) admits that there is a strong element of social meaning underlying cognitive interpretation. Also, evidence from empirical studies (e.g. Parry 1987; Toprak 1997), give credence to the claim of distinctive cultural forms of knowledge and modes of thinking which frame subjects'

¹⁴ Billig (1987) adopts this discursive view of human agency when he argues that "thinking" can be seen as a participation in the social process of argumentation, and depending for its efficacy on rhetorical skills.

interpretation of texts. Many sociologists believe that culture is embedded in language and in everyday practices and therefore constrains cognition. D'Andrade (1995) for example believes in what he refers to as "automatic cognition". In this routine, everyday cognition relies heavily on culturally available schematic knowledge structures that represent objects or events and provide default assumptions about their characteristics, relationships and entailments under conditions of incomplete information. Furthermore Vygotsky (e.g. 1978) believed in an ecological view of cognition, which for him transcends the mental into the social. Goffman's (1974) work on the frames through which people structure experience, shows how the organisation of framing activity is itself socially situated. Goffman's work provides an elaboration of the contextual presuppositions that people both use and construct during inferencing, and offers a view of the means by which these presuppositions are externally constructed to impose external constraints on the ways in which we understand messages.

The analysis in this chapter has dealt with the capacity of presupposition constructing the ground/figure gestalt, which provides structure to the discourse, in which presupposition and assertion, seen in terms of theme and rheme, providing a kind of textual framing device that orient readers towards particular perspectives. I am now interested in cultural and background knowledge interrelating with textual information to form a kind of ground/figure gestalt and therefore framing discourse interpretation in specific directions and forms in the mind of the reader. In their paper, "The Epistemic Community", Miller & Fox (2001) argue that culture pre-equips human subjects with categories or forms that enable them to bring objects into view. They make the point that objects are not objects of knowledge until they comport to the *a priori* idioms of the human mind. The consequence is that the world does not come to us strictly as we experience it; we organise categories (schemata) that await instances of affirmation. Following Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Lyotard and Rorty, Miller & Fox argue that knowledge is perspectival and is relative to the subjects who are constructing the knowledge. From this point of view, knowledge or truth claims make sense only if they fit into some pre-existing conceptual scheme taken as coherent by an epistemic community. This

epistemology rejects Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*, with its isolated single knower and pure consciousness, and related atomistic epistemology. They insist,

We cannot imagine a genderless, cultureless, raceless, classless, ageless, and disembodied self. In contrast perspectivism recognises an embodied subject, situated in a world where meanings are already there upon arrival (Miller & Fox 2001:676).¹⁵

Following Merleau-Ponty (1964), Miller & Fox argue that humans perceive by calling forth figure from ground according to their intentionality, which for them amounts to significance combined with consciousness. According to them within a community of knowers, only some aspects of a field of knowledge can be brought to figure at any moment depending on what they determine as urgent, interesting or significant. The point of this analysis is that the ground is not explicit within textual structure. It is the knowledge schemata and mental categories of the reader, formed in them by their history of interaction within their cultural environment that function as the ground, which then selects certain constituents from the text and confers figural significance on them.

Iser (1974) held the view that the aesthetic object is never complete without reader realisation of the text. This realisation is by no means independent of the disposition of the individual reader, and this predicts that the aesthetic object would vary from reader to reader. By claiming that it is the twists and turns inherent in texts that make reader involvement in aesthetic production crucial, Iser makes it appear that it is objective textual features alone which constrain readers to make the completions that they make. But the analysis of cultural and sociogenic view of human development and perspective taking in text interpretation indicates that different cultural upbringing may effect different reader dispositions, which may not only have constraining effects on the kind of materials they use to fill in textual gaps, but also on their individual dispositions towards textual twists and turns, and on what and what not to see as textual gaps. Also, reader participation in aesthetic creation may not necessarily be as idiosyncratic as Iser's analysis presumes it to be. The

¹⁵ In spite of all that, I have not seen anything in the Miller and Fox paper to indicate that they assume human beings to be culturally determined creatures entirely unable to break through the circumstances of their surroundings to create new knowledge or relate to another cultural environment.

content and quality of reader responses to textual suggestions may indeed form part of cultural contributions and productions in general.

2.4.3. Dialogism and intertextuality

It is an originally Wittgensteinian (1953) idea that it is an illusion that there is a one-to-one correspondence between words and facts. It is not just the connotations of words that shift from one situation of utterance to another; even denotations are hard to pin down. Miller & Fox (2001:673/4) consider various denotations of “bear” (n), to demonstrate how slippery word meanings could be¹⁶. Miller & Fox are at this point talking about the partitioning effect of presupposition when they remark that “(t)here seems to be a barrier between a word and the thing it purports to represent”. In my analysis, however, I have implied that presupposition is not merely a barrier that separates a word and its meaning; it is also a bridge that links both the author and the reader. In this section I would like draw on the Bakhtinian idea of dialogism and the notion of intertextuality to demonstrate that presupposition has a certain duality of effect which may allow words not only to set up barriers and partitions but also to link bridges and convergences.

During the outbreak of “foot and mouth” in UK nearly four years ago, the press was restrained from using the word “holocaust” to describe the smouldering heaps of carcasses that littered the British countryside. There has been a certain accretion of meaning to this word through history such that one needs to be careful not to make any facetious use of it. It is likely that some readers who are cognitively and emotionally remote from the word may be oblivious of the passions it can stir. Leiman (2002) has noted that “the historicity of signs” is closely linked with the dialogical relations within which they are used. He refers to Bakhtin’s (1986) claim that the word, as a bottomless depository of meaning, reveals something of its meaning in any event into which it enters. The Bakhtinian idea of polyphony is that

¹⁶ Placed beside Miller and Fox, Iser would seem an inveterate formalist because of his belief in the prior existence of the text. If even the denotations of texts are shifty then belief in the determinacy in texts seems quite romantic. This position obviously flies in the face of Dolezel’s intensional and extensional distinction. But one cannot equate Miller and Fox with Fish, who did not even believe the text contained anything like meaning or structure before it came into the view of the reader.

words and utterances created by others are permeated by foreign accents and semantic positions and they begin to come alive for us when we in turn, populate them with our own accents. Accordingly, understanding is an act of response to the 'voice' of the sign. Understanding is always an act of encountering something present here and now in the sign's meaning, and enriching it through the reader's own context dependent position¹⁷.

Leiman points out that both Volosinov and Bakhtin continuously call attention to the idea that signs are addressed. He refers to Volosinov's claim that the word is determined equally by whose word it is and for whom it is meant. The word is a bridge between the self and the other; if one end of the bridge depends on the addresser the other depends on the addressee. Leiman notes that this dialogical quality of signs embraces some aspects of that which sets the Bakhtinian understanding of signs clearly apart from structuralist and lexical semantic notions. In Volosinov's analysis, the use of any utterance positions the speaker in a double sense. It creates a specific relationship between him and the object being referred to and, at the same time, calls the other participant (the addressee) as a witness and an ally. In other words, while the word links the user to that part of reality the speaker refers to by using the word, it also links the subject to the other by speaker's invitation to the hearer to participate in the ascription of meaning to the word.

The dialogic understanding of signs transcends individual users of the language to touch the community as a whole. The idea is that neither the speaking voice nor the understanding mind is a solitary individual. Linell (2003) has noted that texts and utterances are not the speaker's/writer's own products; they typically contain (explicit or implicit) elements from other sources, traces of texts of other users and their utterances (other 'voices'). However, dialogism cannot be said to entirely

¹⁷ The idea of the dialogic or polyphony of voices is not completely unknown to presupposition literature. It may be recalled that Strawson's (1950) original examples are constructed in the context of conversations and his sentences are framed with the speaker making assumptions about the hearer's state of mind, incorporating the voice of the hearer in the voice of the speaker. Burton-Robert's (1993/7) appropriation of the notion of metalinguistic negation is intended to help him construct presupposition negation as a rejoinder in which the speaker objects to certain aspects of a previous statement. One can also refer to Sternberg's (2001) treatment of presupposition factives in terms of indirect discourse with his line up of viewpoints from a quoter and a quotee (the presupposer and the subject of "knowledge").

exclude individual agency. According to Leiman (2002) utterances contain at least two voices: the voice of the speaking person and the voice of the social language through which it is ventriloquated. His idea is that the author of a narrative generates novelty by taking a position from which meaning is made – a position that enters into a dialogue and takes a particular stance in addressing and answering others and the world. What Leiman means is that authors do not merely appropriate the words of previous users of the language, what they do is to source prior texts and permeate them with new positionings by reordering and endowing them with new voices and meanings. The social language which the author appropriates in the process of writing is the same language that the reader, embedded in the same public practices, appropriates to recover the text's meaning. But the theory of dialogism provides that both the author and the reader intertwine this publicly available language with significances that are novel and pass the word on having overlaid it with their individual additions of meaning.

Kristeva (1969)¹⁸ describes the Bakhtinian idea of text as a mosaic of quotations and other texts, which it absorbs and transforms. She notes that by introducing the status of the word as a minimal structural unit, Bakhtin situates the text within history and society. Bakhtin imputes to the literary word three coordinates of dialogue: the writing subject, addressee, and the exterior texts. The word's status is thus horizontally defined as belonging to the writing subject and the addressee, as well as vertically as oriented to the anterior or synchronic literary corpus. Bakhtin considered writing as the reading of an anterior literary corpus and the text as absorption of and a reply to another text. This is what makes valid his idea of the polyphonic nature of texts.

The idea of polyphony can migrate easily into the discourses of presupposition. All this compendium of antecedent texts and voices participating in current discourse come as oblique utterances, implicit structures, presupposed references, functioning as frames of interpretation and as received discourses which confer value and significance to new discourses. Culler (1981) notes that for a text to be significant it

¹⁸ My use of Kristeva's (1969) work here is based on an analysis of it by Agger (1992).

must stand in a relationship to a body of discourse, an enterprise which is already in place, other projects and thoughts which it implicitly takes up, prolongs, cites, refutes and transforms. This function, according to him, is served by the text's presuppositions. It seems to him that it is presupposition which allows certain portions of all other discourses, images and texts created before to become salient within the texture of the current discourse and to admit new discourse into the structure of discourse already stored in common memory. Presupposition therefore is not merely a device which partitions discourse into old and new information but also a bridge that links prior text to current text, the current word to older sources of meaning, and the speaker to previous users of the word and to others who will later interpret the word.

As a linguistic form which accesses prior memories and texts, presupposition has been analysed as a form of intertextuality¹⁹. According to Culler (2000), intertextuality has a double focus, (i) it calls to mind the importance of prior texts, insisting that the autonomy of texts is a misleading notion and that if a work has the meaning it has it is only because certain things have already been written, and (ii) in so far as it focuses on meaning, intertextuality leads us to consider prior texts as contributions to a code, which makes possible the various effects of signification. Intertextuality thus becomes less a name for a work's relation to particular prior texts than a designation of its participation in the discursive space of culture: the relationship between a text and the various languages or signifying practices of a culture and its relation to those texts which articulate for it the possibilities of that culture. Culler argues that the study of intertextuality is not the investigation of sources and influences, as is traditionally conceived; it casts its net wider to include anonymous discursive practices and codes whose origins are lost, and which make possible the signifying practices of later texts. Intertextuality in this light is the consideration of all texts as products of the culture in which they were created and within which they may be maximally interpreted.

¹⁹ Porter's (2002) definition of presupposition in terms of "assumptions a text makes about its referents, its readers and its context, to portions of the text that are read but not explicitly 'there'", may be seen as defining the relation as a type of intertextuality. Porter draws attention to the phrases or images familiar to the audience and reinforcing their expectations.

The implication of the ideas of intertextuality and dialogism for fictional worlds aesthetics is that the extensions of worlds for different texts from particular traditions will exhibit demonstrable shifts of texture from one text to the other. In other words, the materials readers have found useful in the construction of the fictional worlds for particular texts will come into service again and again in their interpretation of several other texts from the same cultural tradition, with the texts standing in several different relations to one another: similarity, contrast, variation, expansion, contraction, as it were, one fictional world entering into a dialogue with the other.

Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated on issues that have not really been given focal attention in the history of mainstream presupposition study. But the main insights of presupposition scholarship form the ground which allows the present study to acquire significance. Conventionally presupposition has been associated with background knowledge and this association is legitimate whether the assumptions about such knowledge are valid or not. The intuition that speakers and hearers can have different assumptions about common ground has implications for the way texts are interpreted, i.e. whether the communicative intention of the speaker should be the priority of every interpretive effort. While readers are obliged by ethical considerations to make the effort to match their presuppositions with the author's presuppositions, there is no evidence that these efforts would necessary end in a convergence of thought. The analysis of pragmatic structures of discourse, interpretive frames, structures of knowledge, the role of culture in the acquirement of world knowledge, the convergence of text, culture, knowledge and meaning, lead to the conclusion that discourse interpretation is a dialogue between the author's and the reader's world views, intentions, priorities and presuppositions.

There has also been in the chapter the pursuit of the idea that meaning is not the property of the isolated individual mind even though textual interpretation will normally vary from individual to individual. The analysis has shown that just as the

autonomy of the author is not entirely absolute because each text grows out of a body of pre-existing texts, so is the autonomous reader not completely absolute because meaning can only be constructed with the cognitive and interpretive resources we share with other members of our cultural community. The argument of this chapter is not merely that readers from different cultures read texts differently, but more importantly, that readers from a common background normally have on hand comparable cognitive and culturally inherited categories of knowledge which enable them to construct aesthetically significant fictional worlds for the texts they read in more or less similar ways.

The theoretical questions that have been explored here open the way now for an empirical study to test some of the claims made. This concern will again send us beyond the limits of orthodox presupposition research and methodology, which has generally been satisfied with researcher constructed texts and application of rules of logical analysis and quantification. The chapters that follow will be just as multidisciplinary as this one. We have to bring to the test these assumptions about the function of cultural background on author, text and reader.

Chapter 3: Methodology: Accessing readers' background knowledge

3.1. Introduction

The search for analytic paradigms for the study of literature has led to a number of researchers bringing the insights of cognitive science to bear on the study of literature. Richardson & Steen (2002) and Steen & Richardson (2003) have noted that a number of literary theorists and critics are steadily producing work that finds its inspiration, its methodology, and its guiding paradigms through a dialogue with one or more fields within cognitive science: artificial intelligence, philosophy of mind, neuroscience and evolutionary biology. In addition to providing an analytical framework for the description of the literary process, Jackson (2003) has pointed out that the general idea in cognitive science has been that literary studies can benefit from theories and practices that are more in common with science. A cognitivist approach to literary interpretation will try to base its claims on procedures commonly used in the natural sciences; while not failing to treat the text as literature; science is meant to anchor interpretation. Literary interpretation will therefore have to imitate the scientific model of investigation and explanation. Jackson claims that supporters and theorists of cognitive literary theory find this appealing because the blend will bring to literary study a new kind of rigour and legitimacy to what they see as the “relativistic mess” (i.e. lack of scientific rigour) of current theory and practice of literary studies.

However, cognitive literary theory has not really focused on the processes of the ordinary literary reading. The approach only seeks to provide experts in the field with the facility to make their explication of literary texts respectable in the scientific community. It is worth noting that while Fauconnier and Turner's (1998) Conceptual Integration Network (CIN), for instance, has inspired well-motivated readings of literary texts (e.g. Hiraga 1999 and Herman 1999), it has not provided a

paradigm for any empirical investigation into the ordinary literary reading process. For an inquiry that focuses on the reconstructions of literary texts by ordinary readers, it seems necessary to look somewhere other than cognitive poetics for a research paradigm.

The pre-occupation, in this study, with a research paradigm was also the preoccupation at the first conference of the then newly formed International Society of the Empirical Study of Literature in Siegen, Germany in 1989 (de Beaugrande 1989). It was clear then that the empirical study of literature (ESL) was not yet a 'normal' science, with its own research paradigm prescribing procedures for practice and evaluation, and so appeals had to be made to the antecedent sciences like psychology and sociology, which had well-established empirical methodologies. It was stressed at the conference that empirical study of literature was not going to be another hermeneutic inquiry, concerned with textual analysis by literary critics. The researcher in the literary process will have to subdue his/her own interpretive ambitions to say new and striking things about the text and should not fall into the trap of becoming the personal embodiment of the reader. The new inquiry was going to be oriented towards literary actions and processes rather than to textual structures. ESL was to avoid projects to prove that interpretations of a literary text must converge on a single valid version, which in the view of the conference, would be a matter of coercion in practice. Neither was ESL going to provide tools for evaluating texts on a scientific basis. The literary theorist can no longer be content with building models of established practice but must contemplate alternate practices, which might be more suitable to the literary transaction in its most conducive and rewarding modes. What was needed was an explicit development of theories and models of communication which could be compared with actual activities of literary readers and the extraction of hypotheses and predictions from those models, which will be subjected to empirical tests in order to generate evidence for preferring one theory or method to another.

The preferences of the new society for a research paradigm seemed to put them in the general direction of discourse psychologists, who had, for some time, been

concerned with the actual experience of literary/discourse processing that readers have to undergo. It will be important that in a study like this one, which has most predilections of an empirical study of literature, to take a serious look at methodological paradigms commonly used in discourse psychology with the view of finding which procedures can serve the purposes of this study. One methodological procedure which needs exploration in this chapter is Protocol Analysis, popularised by Newell & Simon (1972). It has been used in discourse psychology and also in ESL. There is the need to look at the procedure as a method of data collection in order to ascertain in which form it can be used in a study like the present one. Every methodological framework follows particular theoretical paradigms, each one of which has its own assumptions on what constitutes knowledge, and how the acquisition of knowledge may be carried out. Basically, the choice is between positivist quantitative frameworks and qualitative frameworks. It has to be determined which framework can better serve the requirements of this study, particularly, in the attempt to access the subjective and experiential responses of individual readers as they make sense of literary texts.

This chapter will therefore fall into three sections. The first section will begin with a discussion of the standard methodological praxis in discourse psychology, and then move on to examine the positivist views which underlie such praxis. The discussion will then focus on the qualitative paradigm and argue the greater suitability of qualitative procedures for reading research. The second part will be an appraisal of protocol analysis (verbal responses) as a research method. Attention will be given to the common merits and challenges of the procedure discussed in the literature. I will also discuss adaptations of this procedure which are used in the present research. The third section presents the research design focusing on Jenkins's (1979) situational determinants in cognitive processing: subject characteristics, orienting tasks, test materials and criterion tasks. Choices being made in the methodological framework are to give sufficient opportunity to readers to make, as fully as they can, their individual and unique responses to the texts they read. Any controls that are exercised are to ensure that there is no loss of the rigour of a scientific study.

3.2. A methodological paradigm for literary comprehension

3.2.1. Discourse psychology and studies in text comprehension

The work of discourse psychologists should be of great interest to researchers into the literary process since they seem to be involved with the same activities of accessing individuals' processing strategies in the ordinary reading context. As Graesser et al (2003) have stressed, discourse psychologists, as scientists, test their claims about comprehension by collecting data from humans and observing whether the data fits their theoretical predictions. Again Graesser et al (1997) claim that experiments can test psychological theories of human cognition, behaviour and emotion by systematically creating story micro-worlds, controlling several variables and observing comprehenders' responses. They note that discourse psychologists have investigated a broad array of texts ranging from texts written by researchers to naturalistic texts, which include folktales and literary short stories. These investigations seek to uncover a representative set of discourse features, patterns, devices, meanings and comprehension processes that are prevalent in a culture.

Researchers have used subjects with varying knowledge about the content of the texts in order to assess the role of knowledge in the processing of texts. Research in discourse psychology (e.g. Graesser et al 1994 and Singer et al 1994) has noted that the reading process is 'an effort after meaning', that is, an interpretive activity. The focus is on how readers mobilise cognitive resources to construct meaning with regard to the constraints imposed by the text. Additionally such theoretical constructs as the propositional structure, the textbase and the situational model (Kintsch and van Dijk (1978, and Kintsch 1988, 2000) by which discourse psychologists explain the nature of levels of representation in comprehension and the cognitive strategies readers adopt, seem to offer research in the literary process the required analytical tools and methodological framework.

However the researcher into the literary process should be cautious about the methodologies and constructs adopted by the discourse psychologists. De Beaugrande (1989) warns against the reductionism that seems to be the feature of the antecedent disciplines, and the scientism of discourse psychology puts it in this category. Tetlock (1988) notes that psychologists in general, in the study of texts, focus on explaining aesthetic preferences in terms of activation; they quantify and objectify meaning, account for variance, use computer models to access literary experience. In such a study, as Graesser et al (1994) claim, the ideal dependent measure would be to track various cognitive processes by charting response times, gaze latencies, naming latencies, eye tracking studies, lexical decision latencies, memory recognition latencies and recognition judgements. Clark and Haviland (1974) actually used reading time latencies to distinguish between literary and non-literary reading (see also Zwaan 1993).

Kuiken et al (1989) argue that both behavioural and cognitive psychologists have avoided involvement with methodological issues relating to the discriminative study of human experience. Even though contemporary cognitive psychology affirms the importance of mental events, and is expected to give greater attention to methodological issues that arise in the serious study of experience, it offers little improvement over the behaviourally oriented predecessors particularly in the development of research methods faithful to experience from the point of view of the person being studied. Cognitive psychologists concern themselves with the theoretical constructs of the investigator; they use analytical categories and rating scales rather than focus on experience from the point of view of the person studied.

The emphasis in psychological chronometric measures is control and precision and this is what determines their choice of materials and procedures. Zwaan (1993:36) for instance notes that in most psychological experiments on text comprehension the texts to be read by subjects are especially constructed by the experimenter. Often, the experiment focuses on the comprehension of one or more sentences in a text. The rest of the text consists of "filler" sentences. In other words the texts have not

been written to convey a message but with a goal of examining how to process a given linguistic unit. In spite of the relatively uninteresting nature of these texts, Zwaan stresses their advantages when it comes to precision and generalizability. The texts are created to be optimally suited for the testing of hypotheses. Even though many researchers (e.g. Vipond & Hunt 1989) have spoken about the ecological invalidity of such texts, the exigencies of psychological experiments make their continued use imperative.

When Miall (1995) calls for the collection of all information that can be collected from as many kinds of readers as possible about what is actually taking place during literary reading, he must have been calling for the collection of readers' phenomenal reports during the process of comprehension. But Zwaan (1993:37) makes no use of verbal reports, "or any method which may hamper the fluent reading". There is indeed scepticism in the discourse psychological literature about the experimental use of reader's verbal reports. Graesser et al (1997) claim that verbal protocols do not reliably tap unconscious comprehension processes, and that both conscious and unconscious processes can be tapped in word naming tasks in which readers are periodically interrupted during comprehension and asked to name a test word as quickly as possible. The assumption is that the naming latency should be quick if the features of the word match the representation in the mind.

Indeed Suh and Trabasso (1993), Trabasso and Magliano (1996) and Graesser et al (1994) collected readers' verbal reports; but only as part of a three pronged procedure to identify the kind of inferences readers were likely to make so as to test them with chronometric measures. Again, reading research in discourse psychology has mainly focused on the kind of inferences readers make on-line, i.e. real time moment by moment inferences made as they progressed with the reading exercise. They seem to equate comprehension with on-line processes. The debate between the so-called minimalists (Mckoon & Radcliff 1992) and the constructionists (e.g. Garnham 1992, Singer & Halldorson 1996, Lutz & Radvansky 1997) is to decide which inferences are made on line. Graesser et al (1997) argue that off-line processes (which may include summarisation tasks, retrospective reports and post

test debriefings) are not well suited to capturing the processes and representations that are constructed on-line during comprehension.

The paradigm being followed by these discourse psychologists is therefore clear. They strive after the same paradigm being followed by the theorists of cognitive poetics in seeking to access the unconscious sub-personal processes which underlie personal level pragmatic processes. What is lacking in the cognitive models used by the discourse psychologists is how to capture the interactive activity involved in the understanding of literature, which requires that readers place the text in context of their own lives and make their personal experiences orient towards the objective text. Drawing from Iser (1978), Braun & Cupchik (2000) argue that gaps in the text can be resolved by readers in different ways in the “virtual dimension” between the reader and the text. Connecting to the text’s suggestions by integrating personal prior experiences will result in unique interpretive experiences for the reader. There is therefore something phenomenological or experiential about the understanding of texts that the positivist models of cognitive science cannot capture.

3.2.2. Objectivity and subjectivity in reading research

Myers (1997) notes that research methods have been variously classified into objective and subjective, as being concerned with the generation of general laws (nomothetic), as being concerned with the uniqueness of each particular situation (ideographic), as aimed at prediction and control versus aimed at explanation and understanding, as taking an outsider view (etic) versus taking an insider view (emic). There is no arguing of the fact that studies in text comprehension by cognitive scientists have been nomothetic rather than ideographic, and etic rather than emic. They seek to explain textual and extratextual relationships in a deductive fashion amenable to generalisability, and they attempt to assert as definite and unproblematic textual and cognitive relationships. This, according to Altheide & Johnson (2000), is not the way to study the construction of meaning. Studies into literary comprehension should be interpretive, that is, account for all the cognitive and experiential resources that readers mobilise to enter into an interaction with the text

in order to create a unique response. Research into the literary process, which cannot be positivistic, should be more purposeful if it focuses on the phenomenal accounts of readers' experiences rather than on the brief, time measured behavioural responses elicited by discourse psychologists.

3.2.3. Reading research and qualitative inquiry

There is indeed a case to be made for pursuing the study of the literary process as a qualitative inquiry rather than as a quantitative study, which has been the preferred paradigm of the discourse psychologists. The qualitative paradigm offers an epistemological framework most suitable to the study of the experiential and phenomenological nature of the reading process. Becker (2003) has identified two circumstances that seem to produce the differences between quantitative and qualitative methods and these, according to him, come from the questions the respective approaches raise at the level of data and on the generalisations on social life. One vital difference he points out is that qualitative researchers take the point of view of the other. Discourse psychologists have never aimed at eliciting the point of the other. The representations in the mind, which they aim to access by the use of such chronometric measures as naming latencies, are those they, as researchers have *a priori* assumed should be present. There is no way they can access alternative processes that the reader may have adopted and which may be outside the theoretical model of the researcher.

Also, the emphasis of qualitative research, according to Becker (*ibid*), is on everyday life meanings, shared taken for granted assumptions which make concerted action possible. The attempt is to break into the private thoughts, opinions and feelings of people. This is a far cry from the psychologists' attempt to control responses and limit the respondent sometimes to a mere "yes" or "no" or even sometimes to the push of a button. The empirical study of literature, like ethnography (as described by Becker), should aim "at 'thick description' and also aim at breadth, let research touch everything, even tangentially". This is something the rigour of psychological experimentation has tried to avoid. Data from the reading process is bound to be

messy and uncontrollable because it should incorporate all the fleeting thoughts, sensations, emotions, which readers generate, and the processes they adopt when they experience a text as a work of art.

3.2.4. The Phenomenological Approach

Willis (2001) has noted that researchers are increasingly turning to phenomenological approaches in the study of cognition and consciousness. He identifies phenomenology as the chosen paradigm, which underpins interpretive research. Following Ricouer (1974), Willis refers to phenomenological research as the descriptive study of the essential features of experience taken as a whole. He notes that phenomenology wants to slow down the researcher and hold his gaze on the phenomenon itself, not seeking to locate it in some abstract matrix by saying how its abstracted structure might be similar to others, but to illuminate its specific quality as an experience. Willis takes the phenomenological agenda to be going back to the first naming, describing phenomena as exactly as they appear in the individual's consciousness. Lester (2003) has identified the purpose of the phenomenological approach to be reporting experiences from the viewpoint of the participant based on the perusal of knowledge and subjectivity.

Phenomenology is referred to as a philosophy, a paradigm, a methodology, and is equated with qualitative research (Ehrich 1999). The origins of phenomenology can be found on the wider philosophical underpinnings which emerged from the ideas of Husserl. Moustakas (1990) points out that the main structure of phenomenology is to understand lived experience. For Husserl, phenomenology referred to knowledge as it appeared to consciousness; it is meant to be the science which describes what one knows, perceives, senses, in one's immediate experience.

Husserl distinguished between the natural sciences, which investigated phenomena such as sensations, and the human sciences, which investigates mental phenomena, particularly perception, memory, judgements and in general mental presentations of anything whatsoever. He recognised the necessity of self-evidence, the value of

inner perceptions, and the knowledge of self-experience (Moustakas 1990). Husserl emphasised subjectivity and the discovery of essences of experience and provided a systematic and disciplined methodology for the derivation of knowledge. He utilised data only available to consciousness, the appearance of objects; he adhered to what can be discovered through reflection on subjective acts and their objective correlates. He specified that only knowledge that emerged from subjective experience justified the demands of truth.

3.2.5. Phenomenology as an empirical paradigm

Yegdich (2001) points to Husserl's indication that phenomenology is not an empirical science but an eidetic science. It must be for this reason that researchers like Crotty (1996; 1998), Giorgi (1985, 1997), and van Manen (1991) have attempted to transform Husserl's ideas into an empirical research paradigm.

The achievement of the use of the phenomenological approach in empirical research is the legitimacy it has won for the use of what Overgaard (2001) calls 'first person data'. Overgaard makes reference to Nagel's (1974) phenomenological idea "what it is like to be," which is very close to the ethnographic idea of taking the view of the other, as a criterion for consciousness, and he takes this to be an issue of methodology. For Overgaard, the study of consciousness is a study of someone not a study of something, and making the subject into an object may seriously confuse scientific investigation. Overgaard argues that the problem of scientists in dealing with "what something is like" is a problem of first and third person perspective. Positivists reject first person data because for them it is something that the subject alone has access to and this is quite incoherent with the demand that scientific data must be replicable and generalisable; that is, be objective. Overgaard argues that it is a Cartesian view to distinguish the first person view as subjective and the third person view as objective. Following Husserl, he argues that there is no knowledge without an observer; while third person knowledge has an observer of extraceptive information, first person knowledge has observer of internal states and that both kinds of information are based on subjective experience dependent on the observer.

The distinction can only be between something 'out there' and what we experience as being within ourselves.

Overgaard argues that it should be generally assumed that people are correct in their descriptions of their own experiential states and reports in this case cannot be 'incorrect'. He insists that the use of such positivist measures as structured questionnaire limits subjects' answers just like the button pushing paradigms of cognitive psychology, where the subject is basically considered as a variable or an extension of laboratory equipment.

Lutz et al (2000) have noted that the resurgence of interest in first person methods in the study of cognition and consciousness has led to the development of novel methods derived from psychology, phenomenology and others to extract data from subjective experiences. The objective is to pay more meticulous attention to the intimate and direct knowledge that a subject has about the phenomenon of interest. In the field of neurology, first person data have been used to understand EEG data better. He talks about the uni-dimensionality of chronometric measures and the multi-dimensionality of first person data, which is capable of providing knowledge about the texture and structure of conscious experience and can constrain the analysis and interpretation of neurodynamical data.

Tarnas (1991) has noted that in the last thirty years, virtually every social science and field of humanities has moved away from rationalistic, linear ways of thinking towards an appreciation of multiple perspectives and reasoning in context. Ferrier (1998) argues that the extent to which a study is phenomenologically based is contingent upon the extent to which it rejects the Skinnerian behaviourism, which relies so heavily on control and measured response. Present-day behaviourism, however, has replaced the mechanical concept of stimulus and response with a functional concept that emphasises the meaningfulness of stimulating conditions to the individual, and allows for the experimental study of a single individual. The chronometric measures of discourse psychology and the use of rating scales are all in principle, behaviourist measures.

It seems therefore that the methodological paradigm used by phenomenological psychologists can better serve the purpose of accessing the normal experiences of ordinary readers than what the positivist methods of discourse psychologist can achieve. The common procedures by which subjects' phenomenal descriptions are accessed are verbal reports (Braun & Cupchik 2000) and the long interview (Moustakas 1990). In the next section I intend looking closely at verbal reports as methodological procedures of accessing phenomenal data from readers.

3.3. Verbal Report as a research method

Interest in Verbal Report (VR) became widespread after the paradigm shift in psychology from behaviourism to cognitivism. Newell and Simon (1972) championed the procedure because they believed they could use it to bring experimental data of human cognition to bear on the general hypothesis that the architecture of the mind is appropriately described as a kind of production system. They felt that a systematic collection of these types of observation could be used to test information processing models of human reasoning. Psychologists have been drawn to the procedure because they assume that VRs can give some indication of the psychological mechanisms that underlie cognitive tasks (Long & Bourg 1996) and it is successfully being applied in areas in psychology, education, cognitive science and various decision making problems (Ball et al 1998). In this section I take a look at verbal report as a research method and make assessments of the observed weaknesses of the procedure in the literature, consider what adaptations can be made to standard procedures to make it amenable to use in a phenomenological research.

3.3.1. VR and empirical studies

The last two decades have witnessed the application of VR procedures to research in diverse areas of study. As Afflerbach & Johnston (1984) note, VR was developed to

investigate processes involved in problem solving in general and has been used to investigate how motor tasks affect verbalised cognitive processes even though it has also been used to investigate other processes. Ericsson & Simon (1984/93) have a list of some of the uses VR has been put into, and these include the study of concept formation, syllogistic reasoning, clinical decision making for nurses and evaluation by auditors. Other uses include the study of expert performance in complex software systems and skills and vocabulary acquisition. The assumption is that VR makes otherwise covert thinking processes involved in writing, reading and problem solving available for observation (Taylor & Dionne 2000).

It is clear that VR is now being used extensively in reading research even though comprehension is not considered to be a problem-solving situation (Whitney & Budd 1996). It is believed that VR has the ability to provide a direct view of the mental processes readers are engaged in when they are reading. VR has served the purpose of developing taxonomies of reading strategies, which have led to the characterisation of strategies of 'good' and 'bad' readers and the identification of the effects of prior knowledge (Whitney & Budd, *ibid*). Other uses of VR in reading research include accessing pupils' interpretation of short stories (Rogers 1991), studying learners' comprehension in a foreign language (Katalin 2000) and subjects' on-line processes of text comprehension (Long & Bourg 1996).

VR is generally thought to include two processes: a primary task and a secondary task. The primary task may involve finding a solution to a problem, for instance a tower of Babel problem or a missionaries and cannibals problem. The secondary task involves the subject verbalising their thoughts or the strategies they are adopting to solve the problem (see Ericsson & Simon (1984/93, "Summary and Introduction"). Subjects' verbalisations give an idea of the information states that flow through their minds as they try to find a solution to the problem. It is from data like this that the researcher can extrapolate the cognitive processes underlying the performance of the tasks and thereby make statements about the nature of human cognition and the architecture of the mind. The situation may be assumed to be the same with the reading process. Afflerbach & Johnston (1984) explain that subjects may be

involved in two tasks: answering comprehension questions, understanding short stories or summarising tasks while they verbalise the cognitive strategies they employ to perform those tasks.

The attitude towards VR in the psychological literature is however ambivalent. Gilhooly & Green (1996) recommend the use of VR because it yields a rich data source, gains information about cognitive processes, brings thoughts to consciousness and making ideas verbal and verbalising them. Long & Bourg (1996) identify the strength of VR to be the unique insights it can give about inferential processes during text comprehension, individual differences in comprehension processing, processes involved in conversational discourse and story telling. VR is supposed to be ideal for identifying those inferences that involve access to world knowledge and those that involve prior text information. According to Long and Bourg, VR has the unique merit of accessing underlying cognitive processes, which makes it indispensable in the study of comprehension. Praise for VR however, is not universal in the literature. Ericsson & Simon (1984/93) review some of the objections behaviourists and rationalists raised against the procedure. I would like to review, in the next subsection, some of the more important criticisms raised against the procedure in the literature.

3.3.2. VR challenges and criticisms

While behaviourists cannot countenance any claims to the inner structures of the mind, rationalists find reports rather messy and illogical and therefore not likely to reflect the orderly reasoning patterns of the mind. Cognitivists (e.g. Graesser et al 1994) consider data from VR to be rather fragile. Even though some discourse psychologists have used VR (e.g. Suh & Trabasso 1996, Trabasso & Magliano 1997, Graesser & et al 1997), they did so only with VR serving as a mechanism to develop hypotheses which will later be tested and validated by chronometric measures. Gilhooly & Green (1996) observe that in cognitive science VR is supposed to provide information that supplements response latencies and response frequencies and hence provide further constraints on theorizing. While Whitney & Budd (1996)

accept that the uniqueness of VR is that it offers a fairly direct spotlight on how contents of Short Term Memory (STM) change during comprehension, they also claim that like all methods used in cognitive science, VR is better when used in conjunction with other measures. Some researchers actually consider VR to be merely another process tracing method not different from eye tracking devices (Shaft 1997). Long & Bourg's (1996) statement that VR provides rich databases which may be used to generate hypotheses is revealing of the unwillingness of cognitive psychologists to accept VR in its own right. It seems ironic that while cognitivists accept results from VR only when there is converging evidence from other "objective" measures, naturalists like Lutz et al (2000) use VR to validate neuroimaging data from PET or EEG.

But the more serious criticisms against VRs are that they are non-veridical and also reactive. Non-veridicality may either be that the report does not reflect the underlying processes, in which case it is epiphenomenal to the thought processes, or that there are gaps in the report, in which case it is incomplete. Reactivity has to do with the secondary task (verbalisation) interfering with or distorting the primary task (problem solution). Underlining the charge of non-veridicality, Bainbridge (1999) makes the claim that even though some researchers are fascinated with the rich data obtained from VR some psychologists think they are just useless. After reviewing some of experiments which Nisbett & Wilson (1977) had earlier reviewed, Bainbridge concludes that verbal reports do not necessarily correlate with the processes they are supposed to report.

Incompleteness of VRs has to do with the apparent gaps that may found in verbal data. There are the silences during verbalisation and the "short-circuiting" of reasoning that is common with verbal data. Critics point out that some thought processes are unconscious and these may be unavailable for verbalisation. Bainbridge (1999) insists that tasks done unconsciously will not be available for report. She claims that complex processes involving more than one verbal activity at the same time may reduce performance to something like only a third to half of what each task would be if done alone.

Nisbett & Wilson's (1977) original charges against VR addressed issues like intrusion of fabricated mental events into verbal reports. Such intrusions and distortions may have resulted from the secondary process reacting with the primary process. Russo et al (1989) think reactivity may be caused by additional demand for processing resources, recoding idiosyncratically abbreviated oral codes to be intelligible to listeners and the requirement to articulate strategies that have become partially automated. There is also the need to recode non oral representations, requiring subjects to reallocate resources from primary processes and devote them to verbalisation, which risks reactivity, and temporarily suspending verbalisation, which risks non-veridicality. Russo et al also mention auditory feed back, which creates aural stimulation and enhanced learning as subjects are given the opportunity to reflect on the primary process, leading to the discovery of new strategies or improvement of the old. Finally, anticipating public exposure of their errors, subjects try to shift strategies that may result in the reduction of error but require more effort as they behave in accord with the perceived preference of the researcher.

3.3.3. Ericsson & Simon's cognitive model of VR

Ericsson & Simon (1984/93) take the apparent inadequacies of VR seriously. They attempt to debunk the charges of non-veridicality and reactivity by first using Information Processing Theory to explain the computational underpinnings of VR, and then reviewing over 600 empirical studies to prove the veridicality of VR. They then make methodological recommendations that may ensure that VRs are neither reactive nor non-veridical. In this section I review the main features of their model.

3.3.3.1. VR and the Information Processing Theory

Information Processing Theory proposes that human cognition is an information processing mechanism. The theory postulates that individuals have a vast Long Term Memory and a Working Memory (also referred to as Short Term Memory) with a limited capacity. The working memory stores information that is in current

focus of attention, plus recently added material that is highly accessible and can be returned effortlessly to focal attention. The limitation of the Short Term Memory (STM) capacity constrains only recently acquired information to be stored. Received information takes time in memory during which it is directly recognised and encoded with aid of information stored in Long Term Memory (LTM). Information enters STM via recognition of sensory stimuli or from LTM via associative processes. The theory provides for a Central Processor (CP), located somewhere in STM, which controls and regulates non-automatic cognitive processes and determines information from sensory stimuli or LTM which may enter STM at a particular time. The human subject is conscious only of information which is being handled by the CP in STM.

Ericson & Simon (1984/93) propose that information structure which is held in STM may be referred to as thoughts. Thoughts are selected for verbalisation as they are heeded. Verbalisation is a direct encoding of heeded thoughts and reflects its structure. Taylor & Dionne (2000) explain that with Information Processing Theory (IPT), complex behaviours such as problem solving can be decomposed into component processes and information states, which model the dynamic flow of information. Tasks relevant to the information to which the subject attends can be described approximately in terms of propositions, which are expressible in sentences. Ericsson & Simon distinguish between cases where the subject utters thoughts that are already encoded in verbal form from cases where the subject recodes verbally and utters thoughts which may have been coded in some other form.

Ericsson and Simon postulate a tight coordination between verbalisation and thought. They argue that a fairly wide range of tasks call for cognitive processes operating on orally encoded information. When heeded information is already encoded orally the intended activity provides the input for a process without additional central processing, and verbalisation begins as soon as the internal activation takes place. Verbalisation relies on processes for lexical and syntactical selection that can be variable among individuals but in many situations verbalisation is quite immediate and closely follows the generation of thoughts. Verbalisation is sequential, with input processes coming before output processes. Recalling thoughts and perceived

information however can be heeded faster than they can possibly be verbalised. The form and content of verbalised descriptions of stimuli nonetheless reflect the structure of the perceived situation and the subject's presuppositions.

Ericsson and Simon define thought as the processing or manipulation of symbols in STM itself or between STM and LTM. Gilhooly & Green (1996) explain that thought is a production system, which contains rules composed of a condition part and an action part. If the condition of a rule is satisfactorily matched to the contents of the working memory, then its action part is activated, with consequent changes in the contents of working memory, leading to a new rule activated. The flow of thought is therefore represented by the changing contents of working memory. It is assumed in the model that only one thinking step is taken at a time. Thinking therefore is strictly serial rather than parallel. VR then should be able to externalise the moment-by-moment contents of STM. Manipulations in LTM will result in an unconscious parallel processing. But the model precludes the possibility of any manipulations carried out in LTM. As a production system it is necessary for information either from sensory stimuli or from LTM to be matched to contents in STM.

As Gilhooly & Green (1996) have indicated, the question whether thought is serial or parallel is very important for modelling thought. If thought is completely serial then verbal reports could be useful data on that large portion of thought that is either in the verbal code or easily translatable into verbal terms. However if thought is parallel and unconscious and undercurrent streams exist, then not much can be reported and that indeed will make VR non-veridical. It is this that sets Ericsson and Simon's model against connectionist models, which predict parallel activations, and also psychoanalytic models, which predict unconscious cognitive processing.

3.3.3.2. Ericsson & Simon's response to criticisms

Ericsson and Simon (1984/93) counter the charge of epiphenomenalism with the pertinence of VR. They claim that whenever verbalisations correspond to plausible

intermediate stages in a processing model for problem solving activity, we can infer that information is actually used in generating the problem solution. To be pertinent verbalisations should be relevant to the task, and logically consistent. They explain that tasks may call for solutions that are implicit in the task information or requiring extensive information stored in LTM. Investigators can rigorously analyse the information which is logically required to solve specific problems. Protocols may be mapped onto those steps to check their consistency and relevance. Ericsson & Simon point out that verbalisations of hypotheses in concept attainment experiments are consistent with subjects' responses and thus pertinent to the on-going problem solving process. They insist that experimental evidence demonstrates that information is structured in LTM and verbalisations depict complexities of information stored in LTM. The structure of memory traces in LTM predicts patterns heeded in STM. Also, retrieved chunks of information overlap with structures of stimulus and response. In mnemonic studies it is found that the mnemonic association is retrieved first and the required response is retrieved from it; the more closely related the stimulus and the mnemonic encoding, the easier the retrieval process and the more accurate the recall. Task analysis combined with data analysis permits the sequences of cognitive processes to be specified and these predict successive contents of STM, which indicates the information available to subjects for verbalisation.

Ericsson & Simon's model however does not pretend to offer a full proof against the charge of incompleteness of verbalisation. Nahmias (2002) has commented that while cognitive scientists have identified conscious mental processes with verbal data, they recognise that consciousness is not equivalent with reportability. Ericsson & Simon admit that information is stored in a variety of encodings: tactile, auditory, visual, etc. When the central processor (CP) attends/activates a structure which is orally encoded in the memory it can be vocalised overtly without making additional demands on processing time or capacity. Whenever STM contents are words, they can be verbalised without interference from the on-going process. Verbalisation is therefore limited to oral codes and codes that can easily be converted into oral codes.

Again Ericsson & Simon claim that information has to be focal in order to be accurately verbalised. It is for this reason that they distinguish between Concurrent Reports (CRs), and Retrospective Reports (RRs). Taylor & Dionne (2000) explain that CRs are verbatim reports of a problem solver thinking aloud while solving a problem. RR is the solver accounting for how a problem was solved and is reported after the problem solving activity. Ericsson & Simon proposed that VRs could be accurate when verbalisations are made concurrently with task related activity. Accordingly, inputs and outputs of current processes receive priority in CR.

Additionally, Ericsson & Simon believe that information held in STM are pointers (indexes) to information in LTM (which is itself a highly indexed and cross-indexed data base). Relevant information can be accessed directly because it was heeded on a previous occasion and stored with appropriate access paths. New stimuli make use of these paths without the requirement of a conscious review of previous experience. When appropriate cues are available, recognition is triggered. Verbal reports in such a case will include the input (cueing stimulus) and the output (structure from LTM) while the intermediate stages will not be symbolised. When subjects have to retrieve information that cannot be accessed directly, that is, not indexed, they have to use an active search for retrieval cues and evaluation of LTM structure. A problem to be solved has to find access paths from STM to LTM. This is heeded information in STM, which is available for verbalisation.

3.3.3.3. Ericsson & Simon's recommendations for VR procedures

Ericsson & Simon explain that the central problem of incompleteness is that thought can proceed faster than speech. It is for this reason that many VR constructions require subjects to slow down thought in order for verbalisation to catch up with it. But there are difficulties in trying to slow down thought without changing it. They point out that there are individual differences in verbalisations. Such differences may be reduced by warm-up exercises. Techniques to increase verbalisation may be aiming at slowing down the task directed process. An alternative is to substitute RR for CR. Perceptual access may be denied, stimuli segmented into smaller pieces of

information and presented at a slower rate, on-going skill activities may be interrupted with a signal to give a report of the contents of the STM, reminders may be given at silent periods to keep verbalising. Ericsson & Simon note that it is possible for reading to access information from LTM to generate coherent representation of text meaning. In such a case the reading text may be modified to slow it down. They note that studies have shown that these processes did not change the content of verbalisation.

Ericsson & Simon explain that the fallibility of memory retrieval makes urgent that cues and prompts are used to retrieve information. They point out that studies have shown that paired associate learning can be facilitated by prior exposure of the subjects to proper mediating associations. They note that in problem solving situations with heavy cognitive loads, subjects disregard initial instructions to verbalise unless the experimenter gives specific prompts to them throughout the session. To increase the utterance of thought processes some experiments have tried to constrain the manipulation by adding instructions to think of the task and give reasons for each stage. Taylor & Dionne (2000) suggest that during CR collection, comments should be infrequent and neutral; prompts are necessary only when solver stops verbalising. Whenever required researchers should not prompt some behaviours and neglect to prompt others, and they should use unobtrusive and standardised prompts.

Ericsson & Simon admit that information in VR is incomplete, that subjects do not utter 100% of their thought processes. However if these gaps are consistent and lawful they may be providing information about higher-level processes.

Ericsson & Simon's model predicts veridicality of VR will depend on the circumstances under which the verbalisations are induced. They note that instructions given to subjects may elicit three types of verbalisations, which they refer to as Type I, II & III verbalisations. They insist that instructions for verbalisation tap into different kinds of memory structure. Ericsson & Simon distinguish between description/explanation of processes, and reporting of processes,

and propose that the subject is only to report the content of STM. Types I & II verbalisations are supposed to result from instructions to verbalise thoughts *per se*, while instructions to verbalise specific information such as explanations and reasons result in Type III verbalisation. They argue that attempts by the subject to explain the processes changed the processes and made them liable to charges of reactivity and non-veridicality. The requirement not to explain, edit or theorise minimises working load in STM and is essential for veridicality and reliability. Information available for verbalisation may include what the solver is doing, information searched and strategies utilised. Ericsson & Simon hold that proper instruction and task selection can achieve independence between thought and verbalisation. Neither process interferes with the other once the subject reports contents in STM and those contents are in oral form. Validity may be compromised when tasks place heavy burden on STM, which is the case, they allege, when subjects are required to explain strategies they are using to solve problems.

Ericsson & Simon's recommendations indicate that direct concurrent VR has no significant effect on quality of performance. But Russo et al (1989) review a body of work on VR, and come to the conclusion that VR can cause reactivity. They believe that instructions meant to elicit any type of verbalisation can channel invalidity. They point out that researchers, in their attempts to minimise threats to research goals, are always torn between maximising verbalisation and maintaining naturalness. Attempts to maximise verbalisation through probes and prompts may lead to reactivity, while non-veridicality may result from an attempt to achieve naturalness because of resulting gaps in verbalisation.

Green (1998) however believes that validity is maximised by ensuring that appropriate instructions are used in order to guide the production of verbal reports. Ericsson & Simon (1984/93) insisted that subjects are to conform to instructions. They recommended warm-up exercises during which the experimenter may interfere and disrupt subjects, which they will not do during the experiment. Afflerbach & Johnston (1984) have noted that the novelty of VR requires that most subjects are familiarised with the tasks and this has led to several types of training procedures

being used. Gilhooly & Green (1996) advise that subjects should be made aware of what they are required to do. They call upon researchers to demonstrate the art of thinking aloud. It is necessary to make sure that subjects keep on talking and that their speech is loud and clear. Some participants keep a period of silence after which they have a productive period; this is not retrospective report since problem solving is still going on. On occasion it may be necessary to ask for clarification.

But some training procedures may bias the protocols. Ericsson & Simon distinguish training for VR from the training given during earlier introspection studies. They point out that doubts about introspection included the fact that introspection is supposed to distort the object studied. Training was meant to avoid introspection distorting consciousness, for subjects to introspect effortlessly. As Pritchard (1990) has noted the concept of introspection is the mind observing its own processes. The method was supposed to be to attend to conscious phenomena and not to account for introspection itself. Early introspection procedures involved long periods of training of subjects. The shift in procedure represents the shift from subjects observing their own processes, to untrained subjects who remained focused on the problem under investigation. Naïve introspection came about when cognitive scientists began using naïve subjects. Taylor & Dionne (2000) suggest that warm-up exercises should require less than 15 minutes, and that exercise is to ensure instructions are understood, reduce anxiety, minimise frequency of interruptions/prompting.

3.3.4. Reaction to Ericsson & Simon's model

In a reaction to Ericsson & Simon's methodological recommendations, Pressley & Afflerbach (1995) observe that Ericsson & Simon's concern about CR is that they interfere with on-line reading and distort natural reading processing; but this same concern can be levelled against RR: stopping to report after every sentence or a few sentences will shift the nature of subsequent reading. Reviewing about 30 reading studies, Pressley and Afflerbach observe that there may not be any difference between CR and briefly delayed reports. Taylor & Dionne (2002) point out that CR and RR may be complementary. There may be an overlap of data providing RR the

opportunity to validate CR and reduce the degree of inference in interpreting CR.

Pressley & Afflerbach (1995) again point out that for Ericsson & Simon, reports should reflect contents of STM rather than the thinker's representation of the processes or description of them. But some researchers have asked subjects to report strategies they are using. There doesn't seem to be any difference between subjects reporting contents of STM and calling those processes by name. Pressley & Afflerbach make the point that there seems to be more to reading than the cognitive science perspective assumes: subjects categorise while processing and the more they show sophistication, the more competent thinkers they are. Ericsson & Simon argued that instructions should be neutral with regards to the cognitive behaviour of interest. Some reading researchers reviewed asked subjects to report specific behaviours while others went to lengths not to suggest processes to participants. Pressley & Afflerbach come to the conclusion that researchers' silence on behaviours is more defensible than directed elicitation.

Pressley & Afflerbach also note that Ericsson & Simon's conclusions about VR remain the state of the art thinking. They wanted VR to reflect exactly what is being thought about. Pressley & Afflerbach however think that there is good reason to depart from Ericsson & Simon's strictures even though reading self-report studies have not been analytical enough to permit confident conclusions about Ericsson & Simon's guidelines. It is clear that Ericsson & Simon preferred concurrent to retrospective verbalisation. There have been studies in concurrent processing in reading, but more commonly subjects provided retrospective reports. For Ericsson & Simon the closer in time such retrospective reports are made the better, but it is difficult to assess from studies whether reports reflected traces remaining in STM or are reconstructions, which may reflect the subject's theories of the reading process rather than the actual process they are engaged in. Researchers actually use strategies to constrain readers to give retrospective reports. The question is whether it made any differences whether reports were concurrent or retrospective.

Further, Nahmias (2002) observes that recent practice offers new possibilities, which include training subjects to attend closely, and developing precise language which subjects can use in reports which map out internal structures of conscious experience. He suggests that we can use Kulpe's description of introspection as 'attentively experiencing a mental process' to make subjects pay more attention to what it is to experience those processes. Nahmias indicates that training subjects may not meet Wundt's requirement of 10,000 separate introspections, nor will 20 minute retrospection about two second stimulus do. It is correct to assume that introspection as a skill can be improved. He posits that we do not need to describe our conscious experience in detail, touch the subtle features, since our sensations outstrip our language.

Ramey & Boren (2002) point out that Ericsson & Simon's model recommended minimal prompts and that made sense with problem solving data in which they were engaged. They wanted to know about the moment by moment contents of working memory. The researcher certainly knew the strategies required to solve the cognitive tasks of the research; they only wanted to know how the subject went about solving it. Ramey & Boren suggest that there is a more complex relationship between administrator and participant than Ericsson & Simon seem to recognise. They therefore propose an alternative theory, which posits more working relation between administrator and subject. Their theory assumes that all forms of talk, not just conversation, imply a speaker and a listener and this should not be ignored. They recommend that the task administrator should employ more directive verbal strategies such as echoing and trailing questions. Sometimes the administrator can go further, be more explicit, and probe for information by asking direct questions. But the challenge remains to probe without affecting the test results in unacceptable ways. The administrator should guard against using language that could be interpreted as expressing an opinion. Practitioners should play down their conventional importance and allow subjects to contribute as experts. This is to help subjects to focus less on the novelty and potential pressure of the situation and immerse themselves in the task.

It seems Ericsson & Simon (1984/93) did not completely solve the problems they set out to settle. They had to admit that report from LTM cannot be complete and they had to limit verbalisation to oral codes heeded in STM. The discussion on reactivity ends in an impasse since Russo et al (1989) reported that Type I verbalisation can be reactive with the underlying process. It can be suggested however, that the problem is *not* with verbalisation but *with* the theoretical framework Ericsson & Simon use to explain the procedure. Cognitive scientists, who work with computational paradigms, consider unconscious processes to be important for modelling thought (Pritchard 1990) and this is something Ericsson & Simon's model cannot completely account for. It is for this reason that discourse psychologists like Magliano & Graesser (1991) prefer to use recognition latencies to access unconscious processes.

In their assessment of VR methodology, Pressley & Afflerbach (1995) come to the conclusion that the VR methodology is grossly underdeveloped. It seems true also that VR needs more theoretical attention. A discursive psychology theory will put to rest all those arguments about unconscious processing and peripherality of thought, etc, since the theory does not really distinguish between thought and talk. Meutsch (1986, referred to in Meutsch 1989) gives a brief view of what a constructivist VR theory may look like. He introduces two theoretical perspectives of observation. There is the level of internal cognitive processes, which is a meaningful self-representation of those processes, and an external verbalisation of the internal self-representation. He proposes an inner systemic observer position, where this experience is talked about. The subject is therefore an integrated hearer/speaker, who makes observer specific statements on systemic processes, which become the data for theories of experience. It is the constructivist integrated subject who will be assumed in this inquiry.

3.4. Research design

As part of the conclusion to their review of the over 30 VR reading studies, Pressley & Afflerbach (1995) refer to Jenkins' (1979) situational determinants of human cognition. Jenkins had identified four factors for reading research:

- (a) Subject characteristics: age, knowledge, short-term memory capacity, spatial ability, motivation.
- (b) Orienting tasks provided for the subject: instructions, apparatus, reading goal, modality.
- (c) Materials being processed: genre, length, difficulty, topic.
- (d) Criterion tasks: free recall, recognition, question-answering, summarisation.

Pressley & Afflerbach comment that Jenkins depicted those four types of variables as points of a tetrahedron, which made his model on the role of situational determinants in cognitive processing come to be known as the tetrahedral model. The model seems to offer any reading research the framework by which procedures and results may be assessed. However, Pressley & Afflerbach, after their review of 30 VR reading studies, come to the conclusion that the characteristic VR design did not respond well to Jenkins' model and thus did not respond fully to Jenkins's situational determinants of constructive processing. The design of this study however is meant to closely address the points of this tetrahedron.

3.4.1. Participants

3.4.1.1. Participants' cultural background

The first consideration that was made in the choice of participants for this study was their origin. The focus in this study is on the personal and cultural knowledge that the reader brings to bear on the contents of the text while they are reading, rather than on general world knowledge, which is generally studied in psychology of text processing. Research in literary reading has explored ways in which readers combine personal and cultural knowledge to make meaning of texts they read (e.g Kurtz. & Schoeber 2001; Laszlo 1988). Larsen et al (1989), for instance, have noted that even though cultural differences exist in all categories of knowledge, it may be argued that the influences of culture and history may be mediated, to a significant extent, through the specific experiences of each individual. They argue that in the

case of a text that moves in a universe of discourse which is highly specific to a particular culture and historical period, the reader will have to call upon his/her knowledge about that kind of cultural historical setting. In their study of readers' personal resonance as they read a Hungarian short story, they used Hungarian and Danish readers, whom they referred to respectively as culturally proximal and culturally distant. It is assumed, therefore, in this kind of study, that readers who share a particular cultural background are likely to draw on relatively similar background knowledge in their interactions with the text. It seems that cultural background is a strong determinant of the nature of cognitive processes readers adopt to construct the virtual dimension, which should result from their interaction with the text. The cultural background of readers is a determinant held as a variable in this study. 15 University of Ghana and 10 University of Edinburgh first year undergraduate students participated in the study. The average age was 19.5 for the Ghanaians and 19 for the British.

All the Ghanaian participants were born in Ghana and have lived in Ghana all their lives. But they come from different regions of the country and therefore may have been brought up under relatively different cultural environments. Nine of the British participants were born in parts of Britain and have lived in the UK all their lives. The remaining one was born in New Zealand and was brought up in Hong Kong because her mother is ethnic Chinese. But she also had high school education in the UK. Both groups of students were doing courses in the humanities. There were seven females and eight males in the Ghanaian sample and seven females and three males in the British sample.

3.4.1.2. Other participant characteristics

It will be noted that there is an attempt to hold certain reader characteristics constant. Their ages ranged between 18 and 21, and were more or less the same for the two groups. They had attained an equivalent academic level in their education. These are characteristics that are important for a study like this, but they held no current research interests and so were kept somehow constant for the both groups. Readers'

gender was also not of immediate research interest; and neither was their social class. Another important reader characteristic not allowed to vary was linguistic competence. English was the language of the experiment: the texts were in English and participants' verbalisations and other responses were all in English. It should be noted that all the British readers are native speakers of English. The Ghanaians are speakers of English as a second language. However, as undergraduate students they are expected to be bilinguals, having been instructed in the English language throughout their academic career. The interest of this study is not primarily in how proficient readers are in English, but in the extent to which they can draw upon their cultural presuppositions to construct representations for the texts they read. Difference in subjects' first language therefore is not a determinant of literary processing in this study.

Undergraduate students were chosen for this study for a number of reasons. One reason is that it is required for participants in a study like this to be people who have sufficiently been inducted into the respective cultural environments. The study requires that readers be more or less representatives of their cultural backgrounds and it was assumed that those undergraduate students had been sufficiently socialised by their respective social environments and by the education systems they have been going through. Laszlo (1988) for instance used 17 year olds as his subjects in his study of cross-cultural differences in literary responses. Katalin (2000) has noted that age is crucial in a VR research. She notes that most of the subjects used in such studies are tertiary level students, that is, educated adults, even though some secondary school students and uneducated adults have ever been used. Afflerbach & Johnston (1984) report that reading research has used subjects ranging from 8 year olds and sixth formers to graduate students and college professors. They allege that some young students may not have the meta-cognitive awareness of the processes of comprehension to be able to report on them. Afflerbach and Johnston indicate, however, that young readers are less verbal and may produce less complete reports than older readers. They insist that it is necessary for subjects to be sufficiently verbal. It is assumed the 19⁺ olds being used in the current research would be verbal enough to be able to report on their cognitive processes.

Readers may also be differentiated according to the level of reading skills. Long and Bourg (1996) have noted that reading research has distinguished subjects into skilled and less skilled readers. Skilled readers are supposed to generate more explanatory inferences than less skilled readers. Another source of variability among readers has to do with differential working memory span. Studies by Whitney et al (1991) and Zwaan and Brown (1996) (discussed in Long & Bourg 1996) classified readers according to their working memory span and collected verbal reports as subjects comprehended ambiguous stories. Differences were found as a function of memory span.

It would have been possible to test subjects for memory span and also for reading skill before including them in the study. Some researchers have made such checks before carrying out their experiments. For instance, Laszlo (1988) used a questionnaire to determine subjects' knowledge of historical knowledge before admitting them into the study. Also Kurtz & Schoeber (2001) circulated a questionnaire to identify people who were avid readers before including them in their study. However nothing of this sort was done in this study. Reader characteristics like reading skill, memory span and verbal skill were not of any specific critical interest to this research. It is true though that checks like those may have resulted in higher measure of internal validity for the study. That is, observed differences would not then be attributed to causes such as differences in reading skill or memory span, which were not the point of interest of the study. But it is also true that internal validity would have been a trade-off against external validity, i.e. readers selected under those checks would not be representative of their cultural backgrounds.

Also, it is sometimes helpful to find out if subjects were familiar with verbal reporting and reading comprehension literature before carrying out the research. Some researchers have assumed that subjects familiar with the verbal report methodology may be more effective in the description of their cognitive processes. It is for this reason that Nahmias (2002) calls for more extensive training of subjects.

But this study used subjects who were naïve about VR or reading comprehension literature. They were given some training, but it was not that extensive.

It is clear that for a cross-cultural study, the two groups are commensurable. Subjects' ages and academic levels were held constant. Also subjects turned out to have lived all their lives in the country of their birth, and could not have had direct experience of the other cultural environment²⁰. As far as subject characteristics are concerned, the only interest was in cultural background; and it was the only subject trait that remained variable. Those traits that are normally of interest to discourse psychologists like memory span and working memory capacity were not to play any role in this study.

3.4.2. Reading test materials

Participants from both groups read two short stories: a Ghanaian story and a Scottish story. The purpose was to make one group culturally proximal when they read the story from their cultural background, and then turn the same group into a culturally distant group when they read a story from the other cultural background. The Ghanaian story was "Something to talk about on the way to the funeral," taken from Ama Ata Aidoo's collection, *No Sweetness Here*. The Scottish text was "Dedacus" from A. L. Kennedy's collection, *Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains*. The Scottish text was the first to be chosen for the research. No specific criterion was applied in this choice other than length; there was need to find a story that could be reasonably managed in a reading experiment, by reason of length, time constraints, and the amount of verbal data to be generated. The attraction of "Dedacus" was that it appeared to be a fine story; and it is told in only four pages. After that choice had been made, there came the need to find a Ghanaian text that, at least, shared some of the surface features of the Kennedy text. It was this requirement that led to the Aidoo story.

²⁰ This did not completely apply to one British participant, who was not born in UK and had spent her early childhood outside the country. But she had never had any direct experience of Africa, except those experiences which are available to everybody else, through books, documentaries and other such materials.

3.4.2.1. Cultural background of stories

The stories are being called Ghanaian and Scottish stories merely because they respectively have Ghanaian and Scottish authors. In most cross-cultural literary studies, texts have been chosen because they particularly encode certain historical and cultural period in which they are embedded. Larsen et al (1989) and Laszlo (1988) chose their stories because they particularly represented Hungarian history and culture in such a way that non-Hungarian readers, who have not been given special briefing on the cultural and historical references in the story, may find certain parts of the texts difficult to process. Laszlo for instance reports that the Hungarian short story used in his study has themes central to the Hungarian culture and historical past. The story Skilaki (1988) used has subtle hints about the historical background of Hungary. The story, "Nazi", which Laszlo (1999) used in studying cross-cultural differences between Hungarian and Danish readers, besides conforming to literary standards in both cultures, has themes which have been more prominent for many hundreds of years in Hungary than they have been in Denmark. In this study, however, there was no attempt to select a typically Ghanaian or a typically Scottish text along those lines. There are of course references to Ghanaian historical facts, places and names, festivals and pattern of life in the Ghanaian story, and there are descriptions, which are probably, of Scottish locations in the Scottish text. But these features are not the kind that will be regarded as typically encoding the stories as historically and culturally Ghanaian or Scottish.

But indeed these stories are respectively Ghanaian and Scottish and the distinctions are subtle. Features like belief and value systems, and social structure and relationships are implicit and would therefore require the reader to access background presupposed knowledge and belief structures to be able to explain them.

3.4.2.2. The choice of the short story as a literary genre

It is important at this stage to discuss the rationale for choosing the short story as a

literary genre for a study like this. It seems the practice of most researchers in the empirical studies in literature since the mid-eighties has been to use the short story in their investigations of the literary process. One of the design problems considered at the first conference of the International Society for the Empirical Study of Literature (de Beaugrande 1989) involved what literary texts or samples were to be selected for the study of the literary process. They thought novels to be too long; poetry may entail intractable language, dramas were to be staged not just read. So they settled on the short story because it made a manageable and attractive compromise for the reason of length.

But Halasz et al (1988) had already spoken of the choice of the short story in their study of American-Hungarian cross-cultural studies. They claimed that size is not the best reason for the choice of the short story in the empirical study of literature since lyric poetry could be shorter. But lyric poetry does not represent the reader with action, behaviour and fate of imaginary heroes. With the short story the boundary between the subject and the world is more uncertain. It is possible to identify the hero as a specific actor and attribute motives and dispositions. The short story is considered to be convenient for the study of social perception and one can rely on readers to mobilise their cultural and personal experiences to construct meanings for such texts.

Halasz et al (ibid) locate the roots of the short story as going as far back as mythology and legendary tales. But they connect the prototypical version of the short story, as it exists for educated European and North American readers, with the defining works being those of masters like Maupassant, Hawthorne, Poe or Chekov. The appeal of the prototypical short story is that it presents characters in a critical stage or at a time of critical choice or transition without detailed totality and continuous portrayal of development characteristic of greater epical works. Referring to Edgar Allan Poe, Halasz et al argue that the essence of the short story is in the integrity and totality of impression; the plot, the topic, the structure, the point are all governed by this aim: the shortness of the short story is a consequence of the limited attentive capacity of the reader. In this way the three way unity, frequently

broken in classical French drama, in fact characterises this version of the short story: one event takes place in one day. The short story presents sharp conflict situations in the life of the characters leading to remarkable changes with a condensation of forward-looking moments. Character and actions are presented at the boundary points of the human condition in the framework of many faceted psychological events.

Halasz et al explain that the logic of the short story is peculiarly complex and is directed by mental and emotional experiences, personal memories, fear, and rational considerations about behaviour. So the subsurface thinking is in contradiction to the surface text. It is particularly for these reasons that the short story is most suitable for a cross-cultural literary study. Halasz et al make the claim that the prototypical short story is nearer to everyday life than any genre; therefore by studying them we are in fact studying naïve social psychology. The short story is being characterised as a mirror of everyday interpersonal relations and internal life.

If the analysis offered by Halasz et al is correct, then the short story does provide sufficient motivation for the choice of text in this study, which is focused on how readers use their presuppositions to process literary texts. The compressed nature of the text requires that readers enter into an active dialogue with it and be questioning textual elements and drawing extensively on their personal and cultural background knowledge in an interactive kind of way for them to be able to reconstruct the virtual dimension, which for them would be the story's meaning. As Halasz et al indicate one of the specificities of modern literature is that it usually conceals the simple action oriented hierarchy and this enhances the problem solving aspect of the reader's work. The work of the reader is to reveal the underlying plot hidden well beyond the structure of the plot. There is now the overarching need for the story to have a point, some interestingness to be told and accepted as relevant. All this culminates in the interpretation of the social action in the story. The short story therefore seems to have a greater potential than other genres to organise readers' responses into relatively discernible socio-cultural groups.

3.4.2.3. Textual surface features

The two stories chosen for this study seem to share certain surface features. Both present characters in purely domestic settings and project the intimate relationships and the tensions and pressures they have to contend with in the daily affairs of life. The Ghanaian story depicts two characters, on their way to the funeral of the main character, Auntie Araba, and recounting some aspects of her life. The Scottish story presents a woman, Jean, who goes to a cemetery to pray, meets a man outside the cemetery to have an affair with him in a car, and then walks back home in the sleet and rain to her husband. Auntie Araba, in the Ghanaian story, had a baby when she was a teenager, after an affair with the husband of relative whom she was at the time living with. Jean, in the Scottish story, seems to be having an affair with someone who is her superior at the work place. The affairs in the respective stories and their repercussions seem to be what define and constrain the entire lives of the characters. Auntie Araba's son grows up to be a self centred immoral young man, whose destructive life style and misbehaviour lead to his mother's death. Jean on the other hand is torn apart by moral dilemmas presented by the affair, the undeniable love and devotion of her husband, and her deep and simple faith in God.

There are indeed other features, which confer distinctively Ghanaian or Scottish flavour on the stories. There is the use of names: Auntie Araba, Egya Nyaako, Ato and Mansa, are authentic Ghanaian names. Jean and Brian may be considered names that are quite common in Scotland. In addition there is the portrayal of the typical rural Ghanaian landscape, with market days, lorries packed with passengers, cocoa farms, missionary schools, the chorus of inquisitive and gossipy neighbours, community music and dance, the festivals and crowded funerals. The Scottish landscape is evident in the cold evening, the sleet, the walk on the loans, night shifts, the high-rise council tenements and the noisy poor neighbourhoods.

3.4.2.4. Differences in textual features

“Something to talk about on the way to the funeral” and “Dedacus” differ in some

particulars. The Ghanaian story is presented from the point of view of a neighbour who is supposed to have lived in the same village as Auntie Araba. She therefore presents Araba's life, as an external observer will have to; hence the concentration on her activities and social functions in her characterisation. The omniscient narrator is used in the "Dedacus" story, and there is exploitation of this facility to reveal the innermost architecture of characters. The result is that "Something to talk about on the way to the funeral" has more narration and description of action, whereas narrative action in "Dedacus" is quite scanty. In addition there is a meta-narrative level in the Ghanaian story, where the narrator encounters the narratee and finds the occasion to tell her the story of Araba's life. Therefore while "Dedacus" is quite dense and compact, "Something to talk about on the way to the funeral" is a bit looser in structure. "Dedacus" is about 1,200 words long while "Something to talk about" is 2,500 words long.

3.4.2.5. Experimental treatment of texts

The texts were not in any way structurally manipulated for this study. There was an initial attempt to reduce "Something to talk about on the way to the funeral" to the around the same length as "Dedacus," but that was abandoned. Only the glossary, which the author had provided at the end of the text to explain some Ghanaian language words, was removed; and the Ghanaian language words in the text were replaced with English translations, which had been provided in the glossary. There was no need to let linguistic meanings of those words to stand in the way of any reader who may not know the language from which words were chosen²¹.

However to facilitate presentation to readers and to encourage more complete verbalisations "Dedacus" was segmented into 17 sections, while "Something to talk about" was segmented into 27 sections. Segmenting reading texts in a VR experiment is a common practice. Ericsson & Simon (1984/93) themselves talk of techniques to slow down the reading process so that verbalisation can match the

²¹ One could not even depend on all Ghanaian subjects understanding Fante, the Ghanaian language from which the words glossed in the original text were taken.

reading pace. Halasz (1988) segmented his story into three sections at the borders of critical episodes. In the present study each segment more or less formed a narrative unit, so that there did not seem to be any break in the narrative. Each segment was printed on a separate page. The page was in landscape format and divided into two columns. The text itself was printed in the right column with reading questions printed on the left column on the page. The questions merely asked the “what”, “why” and “how” relating to the on-goings of the narrative, and did not attempt to suggest any particular line of interpretation. Graesser et al (1994) used questions like that in their study of causal relations in narrative texts. They argued that readers normally asked themselves such questions since reading comprehension is a search for answers. The pages were put together sequentially and bound into booklets, which were given to readers during the experiment.

3.4.3. Experimental procedures

The data collection took place in two phases. The first phase of the research was carried out in Accra, at the Language Centre of the University of Ghana, while the second phase took place at the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, The University of Edinburgh. Each phase of the data collection consisted of three sessions. There was an orientation and practice session, and two experimental sessions, during which participants met the test administrator individually for a period of between one and half hours to two hours each. Participants in both the Ghanaian and Scottish groups first read the Scottish text and then the Ghanaian text. After participants had read each text they were taken through a semi-structured interview on the reading text. After the interview, readers completed a background check questionnaire and signed a formal consent form allowing their responses to be used in the study.

3.4.3.1. Selection of participants

In Accra, a lecturer at the Centre, who was a former colleague of the researcher, put up a notice inviting first year undergraduate students to participate in a reading

experiment. The students were at the time registering for the *Study Skills* course for Humanity students, which was being run by the Centre. Thirty students entered their names on the list provided. The first eight female and seven male students who turned up at an appointed time at the centre were registered to participate. In Edinburgh, the head of department put up a notice inviting *Linguistics I* students to participate in a cross-cultural study in reading comprehension. Seven female students entered their names on the list of volunteers. One of those volunteers later contacted some first year male undergraduate students, and three of them agreed to participate in the study. Each British participant was paid £5.00, while Ghanaian participants were paid the equivalent of £3.00 each. The funds were provided by the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, The University of Edinburgh.

3.4.3.2. Orientation and practice

Participants met the test administrator in groups of three and four for orientation and practice. The general aims of the research were explained to participants. They were told that the research was meant to find out how people interpreted literary texts. It was pointed out to them that there appears to be a number of different ways in which a literary text could be interpreted and that no one could claim to be able to make the only correct interpretation of any text. They were told they were going to be asked to read two short stories, and that they only had to interpret them as fully as they could. Participants were asked to verbalise all the ideas, thoughts, feelings, memories and impressions that came into their minds as they read the narratives. They were not to try to make their verbalisations orderly or systematic, but only to try to make sense of the text as much as they could. It was emphasised to readers that what was of interest to the research was exactly all that passed through their minds as they read the texts and that they were to verbalise all such flow of thoughts. To help them with their responses to the texts they were directed to the reading questions which appeared on the right side of each page of the booklet. They were not constrained to answer all the questions; they were to do so only if they felt it was important for the way they understood the text. (See Appendix 1 for a summary of the instructions given to participants.)

After participants had been allowed to seek clarifications on any point they thought needed explaining, they were taken through a practice exercise. The prologue of Scot Fitzgerald's short story, "May Day" was used for the practice exercise. The text was segmented into four sections. Each segment was printed on a separate page and the four pages clipped together. The test administrator demonstrated the technique of verbalisation by reading the first page and thinking aloud concurrently and responding also to the reading questions on the right side of the page. Participants were then asked to take turns at reading the remaining pages. They were encouraged to be actively involved in the reading process, and verbalise all the personal experiences, memories, beliefs, prejudices, likes and dislikes, etc, that passed through their minds as they read the text.

3.4.3.2. Experimental session

Participants, who had entered their names in an availability matrix, met the administrator at their scheduled times. Once they began reading there was no intervention from the test administrator, who sat through every session taking notes, which formed the basis of the interview that immediately followed the reading exercise. Ericsson and Simon (1984/93) speak of prompts for subjects to keep on talking whenever they fell silent. They recommended that prompts should be kept as neutral as possible. Taylor and Dionne (2000) have asked for prompts and probes to be standardised so that it will not happen that one behaviour is probed and another not probed. The reading questions provided the probes that readers needed and so the occasion never arose for any reader to be urged to resume talking. Since the reading was self-paced, readers had all the time they needed to verbalise all that came into their minds before moving to the next page.

3.4.3.3. Interview

The interview was conducted immediately after each reading exercise. There was an interview guide, which indicated the topics of interest and the sequence they were to

follow. The guide was a semi-structured format consisting of both an outline of topics to be covered and some suggested questions. This format addressed issues like the character, plot, setting, theme, and the general mood and atmosphere. The actual questions which were used in each interview, however, depended first on some of the issues participants might have raised when they were reading the stories, and then on the responses they gave at the interview. Generally participants were asked to clarify ambiguity, follow-up certain issues they might have touched on earlier. As Kvale (1996) has advised, the interviewer adopted an attitude of “deliberate conscious naïveté” and did not try to impose any particular interpretation on participants. However nothing was actually taken for granted and participants’ suggestions were probed until greater clarification had been achieved.

The interview session was different from what Taylor & Dionne (2000) called retrospective debriefing (RD). They were interested in the participant recalling as much as they could of the processes they might have used to comprehend the texts. In this study participants were not made to talk about the kind of strategies they were using to comprehend the text; there was no attempt to elicit what Ericsson & Simon (1984/93) call Type III verbalisations. At the interview they were only expected to clarify interpretations, generate new meanings and continue with the construction of their representations for the story. Participants completed a background check questionnaire after the interview and signed a consent form for the use of their data.

3.4.3.4. Recording

A Sony Digital Audio Tape (DAT) walkman was used to record both the reading protocols and the interviews. Even though Katalin (2000) advises that recorders should be kept out of sight, this was not possible since participants needed to speak into a Shure 16A microphone mounted on a tripod for recording to be done. Participants seemed not at all worried or otherwise agitated by the tape recorder. They rather cooperated very well with the recording by drawing the experimenters’ attention whenever the tape was finished in course of the experiment and they resumed talking only when the tape was made ready again.

Conclusion

This chapter has followed Myers's (1997) idea of research method as a strategy of inquiry which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to research design and data collection. The choice of a research paradigm was guided by the ethnographic idea of eliciting the point of view of the other. This required a departure from the kinds of analysis being practised in literary stylistics and by the cognitive literary theorists. It was also necessary not to use the controlled behaviourist responses characteristic of discourse psychology research in text comprehension. The focus on participants' phenomenal responses is recognition of the fact that human beings have the ability to talk about what they know. As Kuiken & Miall (2001) have indicated, qualitative inquiries have the capacity to disembed subtle phenomena from the flux of human affairs. Literary understanding is arguably not merely a cognitive event but an experiential or phenomenal event, and indirect single dimensional positivist procedures are not likely to access the multifaceted nature of such experiences. The use of readers' verbal data is an expression of belief in the potential of the procedure to access the underlying interpretive strategies that readers use to reconstruct representations for texts.

This research, methodologically, forms part of the growing body of empirical studies of literature, and more specifically, it resembles the cross-cultural studies of Laszlo (1999) and Halasz et al (2002). The interest is in presupposition as a type of inference which readers assume to be implicitly indexed to words, phrases, sentences and the entire discourse. It is in the kind of prior knowledge, beliefs and feelings that readers assume should form part of the common ground of the discourse for the narrative to be meaningful. The experiments and interviews generated between 75 and 100 hours of talk. To proceed with the tasks of data analysis this verbal text will have to be transformed into written texts. There is also the need to develop explicit procedures by which the data can be reduced into analytic units to facilitate the identification of the different types of knowledge schemes and presuppositions which

the readers accessed to make sense of the texts. These tasks will be described in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Data transcription, segmentation and classification

4.1. Introduction

In computational and cognitive science studies of discourse processing (e.g. Graesser et al 1997) research focus is normally on automatic and unconscious processes. This study on the other hand focuses on the subjects' conscious use of prior knowledge and belief systems to make sense of texts. The attempt is to access readers' unique responses, and the personal distinctions they make when they read narrative texts. Control of readers' responses, during data collection, was therefore reduced to the minimum, and wherever possible completely avoided. In fact readers were told not to try to make their responses orderly but to make them when they felt such responses were vital to the way they understood the text.

When qualitative researchers collect such data as verbal explanations, observations, and unstructured responses, they do so in order to access the complex of properties that define certain classes of experiences at the time they come into the consciousness of the experiencing person. Such verbal descriptions, however, are likely to be diverse and complex, unlikely to be readily identifiable as a homogeneous class of experiences whose essential properties they wish to describe (Kuiken et al 1989; Kuiken & Miall 2001). The use of such qualitative materials in the tasks of making distinctions and comparisons requires that some sort of systematisation and simplification be applied to the data to give it a certain level of objectivity and to ease the analysis. Simplification of verbal data for the purpose of counting is actually a common practice in qualitative research (see Roller et al 1995; Mayring 2000).

However, any researcher who attempts to simplify, systematise and quantify verbal data should directly confront the problem of the unit of analysis. To decompose

readers' textual experience into units of meaning is to assume that knowledge representations have constituents, and that meaning of complex representations are determined by the sum of their parts (see Chrisley 1998). There is the added problem of hierarchy of meaning representations, which becomes salient in the present study because the interest here is not just in any type of representations that readers make, but in representations that go beyond the surface structure of the text, for whose constructions they might have drawn upon their personal and cultural knowledge. There are therefore theoretical and empirical issues relating to compositionality and hierarchy of knowledge representations to be addressed as part of the attempt to develop an explicit framework for the analysis of the data.

This chapter therefore describes the processes of data simplification and classification; and in doing so draws on materials from various sources to support the view that knowledge representation is not only compositional but also hierarchical. The objective is to determine why and where boundary lines can be drawn through the stream of reader representations, and which units of data require further analytical attention for having gone beyond the surface textual stimulus. The process of data simplification normally begins with the transformation of verbal records on tapes into written transcripts. This will then be followed by data segmentation and classification. The process of segmentation will reduce the data into discrete units, and by classifying them we will assign to each textual unit a specific category of cognitive processing and a class of fictional experience.

4.2. Transcription of readers' verbal data

In spite of Kvale's (1996:174) yearning for the day when qualitative computer data analysis programmes will operate directly on digitised recordings, bypassing the transcription "detour", much of the research that uses language as data continues to employ audio (or video) taping of communicative interaction, which is followed by verbatim transcription and analysis, which includes some form of coding process, to make sense of the data, i.e. they follow the full tape-transcribe-code-interpret (TTCI) cycle (Lapadat and Lindsay 1999). Apparently, there is always a lack of one-to-one

correspondence between the verbal event and what the researcher transcribes from tape recording. This makes the process of transcription problematic. There is therefore the need to make explicit the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the practice of transcription undertaken in any research. This is what I intend doing in this section.

As Lapadat & Lindsay (*ibid*) note, methodological literature on transcription is emerging in discourse analysis (DA), conversation analysis (CA), and speech-language pathology practice. In CA there is a push to establish a set of shared conventions for transcription, and most analysts in that field employ the Jeffersonian Transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson (1992). Ashmore & Reed (2000) point out that CA's rhetoric understands the relation between the tape and the transcript as one of representation or translation from one modality (aural) to another (textual). Green et al (1998) note that underlying the work of transcription, is the belief that it is possible to "write talk down" in an objective way. But, as they indicate, the transcript is a text which re-presents the event, not the event itself. The data is reconstructed by the researcher for a particular purpose and the transcript is not just talk written down. Even though Psathas and Anderson (1990) and Psathas (1995) have attempted to explicate the conversation analyst's actual transcription practices, they admit that transcripts cannot be neutral, that researchers will employ selectivity in deciding what to include in a transcript.

The core issue with the process of transcription has to do with deciding how much data to include in the transcription. Specific decisions that the researcher should make include whether to use phonetic, orthographic or modified orthographic approach reflecting the pronunciation used, and whether statements are to be transcribed verbatim, word by word, including frequent repetitions. According to Lapadat & Lindsay (1999), the real issue which the researcher faces is not how to represent everything exhaustively in the text, but how to relatively reduce the data in such a way as to preserve the possibility of different analyses and interpretations. They observe that in the last few years there has been a shift from the theoretical and methodological positions in CA to more interpretive and constructivist notions of

data organisation. CA has been criticised for primarily seeking rules of conversation organisation and limiting its scope to the conversation itself. CA fails to represent situated meanings and assumes that the author can stand aside as an observer and neglect contextual factors. The primary aim is not to interpret participants' intended meanings, but rather to empirically analyse the social organisation of conversation. Lapadat & Lindsay indicate that some researchers consider the quest for standard transcription conventions as a way of enhancing reliability and generalisability of language data rather misguided and naïve. The process of transcription is not representation, but a re-construction and an interpretation of the verbal interaction recorded on the tape.

While Cook (1990) argues that transcripts should include all those features required to make possible a pragmatic reconstruction of the verbal interaction encoded by the tape, in reality it is impossible to do so. Transcripts, therefore, by definition cannot be exhaustive, complete or objective but only partial representations. Kvale (1996) suggests that rephrasing and condensing of data is desirable if the transcript is to give a general impression of the subject's view, or if the analysis is to be in the form of categories or it condenses the general meaning of what is said. He also indicates that verbatim transcripts are needed mainly for sociolinguistic and psychological studies; and transcripts for psychological studies may include emotional tone, pauses, and repetitions.

In this study I will largely depart from the transcription conventions used in CA. It seems to me that my focus on readers' schemes of knowledge, thoughts and the processing strategies they adopt to generate those structures of knowledge does not require the replication of the kind of speaking situation attempted in CA. There will be an attempt to reconstruct readers' cultural backgrounds, not from kind of language they use per se, i.e. not from differences in dialect, accent or regional variation, but from the personal and cultural forms of knowledge that they access in order to make sense of the texts. Readers' emotional states and feelings will be assessed not from paralinguistic features indicating tension, uncertainty or pleasure, but from the attitudes they express about textual situations – approvals, criticisms, and

expressions of empathy. The transcription process in this study will therefore basically proceed in accordance with the interest of this study, which is only in the conceptual structures encoded in readers' verbal data. Kvale (1996) has indicated that in a research where the interest is in subjects' views, the transcript may simply be field notes checked against the tape and duly expanded. There could be summarisations or condensations. But that is not what I intend on doing. There will be the attempt to remain as faithful as possible to readers' lexical choices and phrasing; reconstructions will be avoided as much as possible. I will use ordinary orthography and mark the relationship between the flow of thoughts and time by the use of ordinary forms of punctuation.

Since there were ten British participants in the research, I decided to maintain a balance between the two groups by using the data from ten out of the fifteen Ghanaians. The selection was just random. I used the data from the first 5 male and the first 5 female participants from the original list of volunteers. Since the interest is in readers' understanding of the entire narrative and not just portions of it, there is the need to transcribe the chosen corpus in full. Table 4.1 presents a breakdown of the corpus of protocol and interview data.

Table 4.1: Breakdown of corpus of verbal data

<i>Group</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Reading protocols</i>	<i>Interview data</i>
British students	10	20	20
Ghanaian students	10	20	20
Total	20	40	40

Each reading and interview session had lasted between one and a half to two hours. We therefore have tape recorded data lasting between 60 to 80 hours selected for transcription.

4.3. Data segmentation

Data segmentation is the process of simplifying the subject's subjective verbal responses by decomposing their data into discrete units of text. This is to make quantification and numerical evaluation possible. This practice inevitably commits the analyst to the assumption that human consciousness has structure; it is systematic and compositional. The point is that verbal data can be legitimately reduced into units of text only if it can be established that human thought occurs in discrete units, and that it is possible to determine naturally occurring gaps in a stream of verbal data. In this section I will first discuss the notion of compositionality of representations and make the point that data segmentation is indeed theoretically and empirically motivated and that it is legitimate to use bits of verbal data and combine them in various ways to make distinctions among readers. I will then describe the segmentation procedures I used to simplify the data.

4.3.1. The notion of compositionality of representations

According to Geman (1999), compositionality refers to our evident ability to construct hierarchical representations, whereby constituents are used and reused in an essentially infinite variety of relational compositions. Fodor and Pylyshyn's (1988) complaint against connectionism was mainly that connectionist models were neither compositional nor systematic even though compositionality and systematicity were essential for the architecture of cognition. As Bell (1996) notes, analytical philosophers like Frege and the Wittgenstein linked the structure of thought with linguistic meaning in their investigation of concept formation. Frege believed that the structure of the sentence could serve as the structure of thought. He postulated a process of decomposition, which was not merely to isolate determinate concepts that were already present as parts of thoughts but also involved the discernment of a pattern or structure common to a number of thoughts.

The idea that thoughts are discrete and composable is widely held in the philosophical literature. Chalmers (1995) for instance, argues that it is a central fact about experience that it has a complex structure, which implies the decomposability of thought along structural and relational lines. The question about compositionality of thought amounts to the question whether human representation is a set of discrete elements with gaps between its members or whether representation is continuous and therefore without gaps within it. According to Dietrich & Markman (2003), a discrete representation would have several individual entities that can be discriminated, with each bounded and uniquely identifiable, whereas a continuous representation, in one important sense, means that there is just one unified entity. They argue that the human capacity for discrimination seems to be a pointer to the discreteness of representation. The ability to discriminate among states in the world enables cognitive systems to refer to individual items from the environment, pick up specific properties of represented items and to combine them as well. Only discrete representations can be combined in such a way that cognitive processes can generate different thoughts for systems to operate on without the original discrete concepts losing their distinctiveness even after blending.

Dietrich & Markman indicate that there is a connection between the ability to discriminate and the ability to categorise. They propose that to classify environmental input, the organism should be able to both identify differences and similarities within its environment in order to be able to impose classes of sameness on those inputs. The capacity for discrimination inevitably enables cognitive systems to categorise environmental input. Chafe (1994) describes the essence of human understanding as the ability to interpret particular experiences as manifestations of larger encompassing systems. Language, according to him, plays a crucial role by categorising and codifying understandings, and organising them in useful ways. The ability to categorise is essential for the human way of coping with the world. Chafe says as we examine some properties of consciousness we find it helpful to divide them up into constant properties, which belong to all experience, and variable properties, which are dimensions along which particular instances of consciousness may vary.

Chafe uses the notions of focus and activation to talk about consciousness and its compositionality. He argues that to say that consciousness has a focus simply repeats the observation that consciousness is an activation of only a small part of the experiencer's model of the surrounding world, not the model in its totality. According to him, this limited capacity of consciousness is reflected linguistically in the brief spurts of language, which he refers to as intonation units. Each such unit verbalises a small amount of information, which it is plausible to suppose, is that part of the speaker's model of reality on which his consciousness is focused at the moment. Chafe argues that in a socially interactive situation, the intonation unit is the portion on which the speaker intends the listener's consciousness to be focused as a result of hearing it. This limited activation allows a person to interact with the surrounding world in a maximally productive way, for it would hardly be useful to activate everything a person knew at once. Chafe indicates that the focus of consciousness is restless, constantly moving from one item of information to the next. In language, this restlessness is reflected in the fact that with a few exceptions, each intonation unit expresses something different from the intonation unit immediately preceding and following it. Since each focus is a discrete segment of information the sequencing of foci resembles a series of snapshots more than a movie, rapidly replaced by another and all have a point of view and an orientation.

I will therefore assume that knowledge representations which the readers construct as their models of the fictional world implicated by the text have structure and therefore decomposable into units of experience. As we examine such internal models it will be helpful to identify them in terms of, and decompose them into the units of meaning by which they are structured. It is only then that we can fruitfully make the distinctions and comparisons between the personal and cultural knowledge that subjects bring to bear on texts.

4.3.2. The unit of analysis

Researchers in the field of discourse processing have proposed a number of competing hypotheses about what constitutes an elementary discourse unit (see Carlson et al 2002). The clause, prosodic unit, turns of talk, sentences, intentionally defined discourse segments and the contextually indexed representation of information conveyed by a semiotic gesture asserting a single state of affairs or partial states of affairs in discourse world are some of the proposed units of analysis. Lemke (2003) has noted that data is analysable to the degree that we make it part of our meaning making world. He notes that the structure and organisation of some particular texts are genre specific with determinate internal rhetorical structure in addition to the structure of their grammatical units. Lemke cites, as the most famous example in classroom discourse analysis, the Initiation-Response-Follow-up (IRF) structure, typically realised as Teacher question, Student answer, Teacher evaluation.

It seems therefore that units of text differ according to discourse type, and that must be borne in mind when deciding on what the verbal unit is supposed to capture. In an analysis of different discourse schemes in the literature, Traum (1998) presents the following as some rough categories that are frequently used:

- (i) *Intention/Purpose*: This is what speakers are trying to accomplish in the conversation. The analyst can link bits of content that strive to achieve the same purpose and segment these bits by subtasks they are working at.
- (ii) *Turn-taking/Initiative*: This kind of structure is with respect to who has control over that part of the dialogue. It is similar to intentional structure to some degree, but here the idea is to label which participant has control rather than what purpose the participant may be intending to achieve. 'Turn' is roughly who is speaking, while 'initiative' roughly is who controls the topic of the speech.
- (iii) *Grounding/Mutual Understanding*: This is the way that information in dialogue is shared leading to mutuality.

This representation has interesting implications for the analysis of readers' protocol data. It should be illuminating to start with the second point, Turn taking/Initiative. Turn taking is part of the framework used in conversation analysis, referred to in recent literature as "talk-in interaction" (see Heritage 2001). The data is divided according to the contribution of each participant in the interaction and the analysis can reveal not only the exchange of information but also how the dynamics of power relations enable certain participants to take control of the direction of the interaction. There is good reason to treat readers' comprehension and interview data as talk-in interaction between the reader and the text (or the interviewer and the interviewee). I have already made reference to the Bakhtinian (1981) idea of dialogic engagement, to the effect that the reading process may indeed be characterised as a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text. Readers' protocol data may, on this intuition, be divided into segments which distinguish between data that are clearly direct articulations of the text, and segments that are the reader's responses to textual statements²². For example,

*Yes, it was a familiar song in those days. Indeed it had been around here for over twenty years. First in Auntie Araba's own voice, with its thin delicate sweetness that clung like sweet berry on the tongue/
Obviously it was Auntie Araba who composed it, and she sung it herself./
which later roughened a little./
She had a good voice when she was much younger, which is normal./
Then all of a sudden it changed again completely. Yes it still was a woman's voice but it was deeper and this time like good honey was rough and heavy, its sweetness within itself./
So even though her, her voice changed its pitch and tone, it was still melodious.*
(Rose (Gh)²³: "Something to talk about on the way to the funeral")

The segments in italics are elements from the stimulus text, while those in normal script are the reader's responses to the text. We therefore have here something which appears to be turns in conversational analysis, with the reader and the text being the discourse participants. The idea of control, implicit in turn taking could enable the analyst to make deductions about the kind of the interaction going on, i.e. decide whether the reader is in control or if they have allowed the text to retain the initiative. An expert reader would be someone who takes control and is able to use the textual

²² The analyst should have good knowledge of the text itself to be able to distinguish between textual material and reader generated material.

²³ 'Gh' and 'Br' appended to the names of participants identify them as Ghanaian or British readers respectively.

input as a resource to support the process of meaning construction. In this study therefore readers' protocols were first of all segmented according to what may be seen as participant contribution.

Traum's first point of "intention/purpose" is also likely to serve some of the interest of this study. A number of discourse segmentation schemes such as the SHERLOCK domain (see Moser et al 1996) and the Grosz & Sidner (1986) scheme make use of intentional relations. Moser et al (1996) for instance say that a discourse segment is a chunk of text that the speaker uses to do something, that is, to perform some function. To be considered a segment, a span of text must have a recognisable pragmatic function. The idea of intentional relations gives one an indication of the kind of discourse activity the reader is engaged in. Readers may be reading, re-reading, monitoring their comprehension processes, hypothesising, making analogies, etc. A segmentation scheme based on intentional relations may reflect the class of strategies and the various transitions in pragmatic processes that define the readers' engagement with the text. Boundary lines would be drawn at the point where clearly there is a shift in what the reader is doing with the bits of text. For example:

- 03.02. *The woman is lost between the monuments/*
- 03.03. She doesn't know where to turn. She is lost in the graveyard./
- 03.04. Maybe she is lost in her life and she doesn't know. She wants to go somewhere and she is tired of walking./
- 03.05. *And the incline hurts her legs/*
- 03.06. So she is tired of walking, not really getting anywhere. But she wants to get to the top. She wants to come to the open, upon the hill, away from the rest in the darkness of the graveyard. She wants to be up close to the openness of the sky./
- 03.07. *When the path evens out a little/*
- 03.08. Maybe indicating that her life; may be, I think, is more of a metaphor of the path, going to the graveyard. Maybe it is a metaphor and the problems in life evens out a little.

Segments 03.02, 03.05, and 03.07 show the subject reading from the text. 03.03 is an attempt at paraphrasing the textual stimulus. She makes some hypotheses in 03.04. In 03.06 she does something different. She presents those propositions in the form of claims, i.e. what she judges to be the correct state of affairs at that moment.

In segment 03.08 she again reverts to the use of hypotheses to ascribe some kind of significance to the text.

Traum's third type of categories, "grounding/mutual understanding" deals with the flow of information in the reader's comprehension data. It is a way of assessing the content of each participant's contribution. The focus here is on the semantic features of the text rather than on its function (see Chi 1997). Idea units can be isolated and then aggregated to give account of the knowledge structures which readers access in order to make sense of the text. Readers who have access to a richer source of background knowledge are likely to generate more idea units.

It is however difficult to settle on what the size of the idea unit could be. This is the question of granularity, how much information to put into the individual segment. Chi (1997) has indicated that grain sizes may vary in size. Chafe's (1994) intonation unit is supposed to be a unit of meaning. Moser et al (1996) have said that even the text as a whole may count as one segment. Of course grain sizes can be fine or coarse. While finer grains may sometimes be redundant, coarser grains may be less informative. Traum identifies three ranges of grain size, which he calls, *micro*, *meso* and *macro* ranges. The *micro* range is supposed to contain roughly everything within a single speaker's turn. The *meso* range can be glossed as a subdialogue with its minimal unit being the "exchange," which includes connected speech between two speakers. The *macro* range is related to phases of dialogue such as "opening," "body" and "closing" for talk-in interaction, and the "transaction" in the HCRC scheme (see Carletta et al 1996). What is at stake is the amount of information contained in the particular grain size. While the *micro* range deals with atomic units of information and the *macro* range is concerned with the subject matter of the entire discourse, the *meso* range deals with a number of propositions which may form a section of the global subject matter.

Even though it would be quite rewarding to pay attention to readers' comprehension at the *meso* and *macro* levels, the analysis in this study will be better served if we concentrate on the *micro* level, for the purpose of making clear distinctions between

readers. Readers' protocols represent different dimensions of their narrative experience – the ever changing scenes of the narrative, the different characters, their respective histories and personalities, the social world, and quite abstract themes and situations that impact the destinies of the characters. The discourse segment used in the analysis presents only one idea unit of a particular experiential dimension. For example,

- 02.01. *On cloudy nights she doesn't bother./*
- 02.02. *She doesn't bother doing what?/*
- 02.03. *And there is no point praying in the flat./*
- 02.04. *The flat maybe a council flat./*
- 02.05. *Just a big crumple block, not much personality./*
- 02.06. *Maybe she feels a bit claustrophobic in it./*
- 02.07. *No point praying in it./*
- 02.08. *She wants to get out of it and to be somewhere, /*
- 02.09. *maybe a church or a graveyard where can feel closer to the spirit or to God./*
- 02.10. *Quite religious feeling about this./*
- 02.11. *There are seven other families above them/*
- 02.12. *Above them in status, /*
- 02.13. *above them in the sky, in heaven./*
- 02.14. *There are seven other families above them/*

This extract may be analysed initially in terms of turn taking/initiative, as is done in conversation analysis (CA), as a kind of dialogue between the text and the reader. Segment 02.01, 02.03 and 02.11 are textual turns, the other segments are reader turns. The first pair of exchanges features a textual proposition to which the reader responds with a query seeking clarification. In a reading situation the reader seizes the dialogue initiative when s/he persists with queries until s/he arrives at answers that present solutions to their processing problem. The reader here does not pursue the question and so leaves the initiative with the text²⁴. The reader makes a more extensive input in the next pair of exchange. Even here she is not clear about what textual input might imply. What she does is to propose a number of hypotheses from 02.04 to 02.06 trying to make sense of the text. In 02.07 she repeats part of the material in the textual turn, maybe to bring it into closer focus, and then carries on with her speculations in 02.08 and 02.09, after which she makes an evaluation of the character's behaviour in 02.10.

²⁴ A conversation partner who does not want the other to appropriate the initiative may decide not to respond to queries; but if the other persists, the initiative may shift, i.e. control of the drift of the dialogue may shift into the other's hands.

Note that segmentation based on turn taking/initiative will actually treat 02.04 to 02.10 as one segment since it represents a single turn from the reader. On the other hand, an analysis based on intention/purpose will put 02.04 to 02.06 into one segment, 02.07 in another segment, and 02.10 into yet another segment because the reader's intentions for using those segments shift from hypothesising to refocusing on textual material and to hypothesising and then to evaluating. An analysis based on grounding/mutual understanding will require a finer granularity compared with the other procedures. The reader uses 02.04 to name a particular type of residence, which has implications for what she assumes to be the socio-economic status of the woman. There is a definite increment of information when in 02.05 she gives an impressionist description of the flat. In 02.06 the reader now shifts attention from the building to the character's emotional state when she is in it. The difference in focus between 02.08 and 02.09 is that while the former segment indicates what the character might want to do, the latter segment indicates where she might want to go. These must be treated as different units of meaning.

Polanyi (1996) proposes a theory of discourse, which seeks to provide answers to three basic questions: (i) what are the atomic units of discourse; (ii) what kind of structures can be built from the elementary units; and (iii) how do we interpret the resulting structures semantically. In this study we are particularly interested in the first question since it pursues the same question of the unit of analysis. In addressing the question of units, Polanyi introduces two elementary structures: the discourse constituent unit and the discourse operator, and then compares them to a number of elementary discourse units proposed in the literature such as the finite clause, the sentence, various prosodic units, the turn at talk, the rhetorical/coherence relation, the discourse paragraph and the discourse segment. She defines the discourse constituent unit (*dcu*) as a contextually indexed representation of information conveyed by a semiotic gesture, asserting a single state of affairs, or a partial state of affairs in a discourse world. In Polanyi's framework, each *dcu*, whether linguistically or paralinguistically encoded expresses an event or a general state of affairs in some spatio-temporal location, involving some set of participants. The

event will either be positive or negative, specific or generic. Two *dcus* which give information about events in the same discourse world will necessarily present information from the same point of view, empathy status, and modality, and relate to the identical genre defined and socially constructed interactional frames.

There seems to be a number of equivalences between what we consider to be the unit of meaning (or the idea unit) in this study and Polanyi's discourse constituent unit (*dcu*). First, both are semantically based rather than syntactically based. They are therefore not necessarily coterminous with the sentence, the clause or the phrase. Secondly, the *dcu*, like our idea unit, depends on contextual information in order to acquire its full semantic structure and therefore is grounded in particular fields of discourse. Thirdly, a number of linguistic structures may express the same *dcu*. Therefore unlike units based on sentential or clausal structure, a speaker may be uttering a stream of sentences or clauses without actually making any shift in the *dcu*. The meaning unit, being used in this study, like the *dcu*, is atomic, i.e. autonomous and complete. Since *dcus* combine linguistic structures with contextual information, the segments used in this study will vary in size – phrases, clauses, sentences or a number of sentences. The criterion is that it should express a single state of affairs.

The procedure for data segmentation in this study followed a number of cycles. There was the initial process of establishing boundaries between what may be seen to be discourse contributions of the reader and those of the text, i.e. in terms of conversational turns or initiative. This process established the boundaries between “textual turns” and reader turns. After that, readers' discourse contributions were re-segmented into smaller grain size based on which pragmatic functions they were using the bits of data to perform. This procedure gave access to the kind of communicative strategies readers adopted in their attempts to make sense of the text. Finally the data were further subjected to a much finer segmentation to isolate the individual meaning units of experiential dimensions in the reader's reconstruction of the state of affairs in the text.

4.4. Developing schemes of categorisation

Tesch (1990) has referred to the process of categorisation or classification as a way of knowing. According to him, we have to be cognizant of the attribute of things to be able to group them. Coding schemes have been referred to in the literature as analytic instruments (Roller et al 1995) or as systems of formalism by which we can represent knowledge (Chi 1997). Kuckartz (1995) considers the development of a coding scheme as the preliminary step and the prerequisite for the following evaluation of the data. In the analysis of qualitative data, there is the need for a framework by which the regularities of responses and patterns of meaning and experiences can be accounted for. A coding scheme therefore serves as the conceptual tool by which the important or essential features of the phenomena under study can be identified and accounted for (Dey 1993). In this section, I describe the procedures and conceptual frames that were used to develop the coding systems for the analysis of the data. I begin however with brief comments on how I intend to use this classification scheme and the general approach used to develop it, and then end the section with how this coding scheme may be distinguished from other coding schemes, and how it was validated.

4.4.1. The use of categories

Tesch (1990) claims that all but the most impressionistically working qualitative researchers use categorisation when analysing their data. When phenomenologists are looking for 'commonalities' in the themes they have identified in their data, they are indeed involved with data categorisation. Tesch argues that it would be quite impossible not to do so if the themes that are by nature comparable are to be grouped together. Categorisation becomes even more urgent if it serves the researcher's interest to attempt a quantification of qualitative data. Quantitative approaches to content analysis have to reduce the complexity of the whole data and isolate single elements in order to count for specific characteristics of specific messages, carefully classifying their data in a system of categories (Roller et al 1995). The process of

data analysis involves simplification and abstraction, and the grouping of data by a set of criteria in order to distinguish observations from participants as similar to that of others or related in some way (Dey 1993).

4.4.2. Approaches to developing schemes of categories

There are two major approaches in which category systems are developed in the literature. One approach is to proceed with a preconceived system of conceptual frames and apply them to the data to assess their degree of match. The other approach, favoured by grounded theorists (Straus and Corbin 1990) begins the analysis without preconceptions and allows the patterns of meaning and categories of reference to emerge from the data. This is close to the Husserlian idea of bracketing all preconceptions and prejudices (Moustakas 1990) in order to access the essence of the experience. Tesch (1990) sees the distinction between the two approaches as one between organising as data management and organising as research result. In this study the attempt is to take a middle course, which combines both approaches. It seems legitimate to assume that narrative comprehension will manifest the social impact of reading; and categories and patterns of subjects' cultural experience will occur in their protocols. However, there is no way of predicting the actual categories of experience which readers may generate. It seems sensible therefore adopt both top-down and bottom-up procedures (that is, keep theoretical positions in mind while doing intensive close study of the actual data) to develop meaning categories for the analysis. The procedure being adopted here therefore is not particularly the grounded approach; it is more of the content analysis type (Roller et al 1995).

4.4.3. Levels of processing and mental representation

The development of categorising systems for this study proceeded as a kind of dialogue between the data and the research objectives. It had to go through several phases of construction and reconstruction. It began with several readings over the entire corpus of reader protocols, with focus on the pragmatic activities readers were engaged in, and the products of those activities. There came the realisation that

readers were processing the text at different cognitive levels. There seemed to be a basic level at which there was no reader input; they were merely articulating the words, phrases and sentences of the textual stimulus, probably at an initial stage of taking in the text or returning to the text to give it a closer scrutiny. At a higher level of processing, readers were using surface features of the text to construct a semantic representation. They were filling gaps of reference, resolving pronouns, ascertaining deictic reference, disambiguating, and so on, all being various types of text level inferences. At another much higher level, they were using extratextual information to evaluate textual features. They were making interpretive inferences, introducing details not explicitly stated in the text, putting their personal experiences, feelings and beliefs into the telling of the story. Obviously, readers were adopting a hierarchy of processing strategies to make sense of the texts.

The idea of multilevel representation of text is quite familiar to discourse psychologists (see Graesser 1994). Most of them refer to van Dijk & Kintsch's (1983) distinctions among levels of representation into the surface code, the propositional textbase and the referential situation model. The surface code is the primary level of decoding which preserves the exact wording and syntax of the clause. The textbase contains the explicit text propositions in a stripped down form that preserves the meaning but not the exact wording and syntax. It includes a number of inferences needed to establish coherence. The situation model is the content of the micro world that the text is about. This micro world is constructed inferentially through interactions between explicit text and background knowledge.

It may be suggested that van Dijk and Kintsch's three levels of representation correspond respectively to Morris's (1938) original distinction of semiotics into syntax, semantics and pragmatics. While readers were engaged at all levels of semiotic representation, this study is particularly directed towards the pragmatics of literature, in the sense of how the reader relates her/himself to textual signals. Referring to the distinctions that Austin made between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, Iser (1978:57) affirms that it is the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts that are of particular interest in a literary study. He argues that in

literature, the implications of an utterance are the productive prerequisites for its comprehension. This preoccupation with pragmatics recalls the Gricean (1957) distinction between “what is said” and “what is meant”. According to Iser, what is meant cannot be totally translated into what is said since the utterance is bound to contain implications, which in turn necessitates interpretation. Since the reader is compelled to transform denotation to connotation, it is at the pragmatic level that the literary text achieves aesthetic value.

Based on the foregoing, I will, in this study, recognise three levels of processing and representation. I will refer to the pragmatic idea of linguistic decoding processes as primary level processes, the processes which generate “what is said” as secondary level processes, and the processes which recover “what is meant” as tertiary level processes. I will respectively refer to the levels of meaning which result from these processes as linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic levels of representation. Primary processes decode textual structure; and resulting linguistic structure is not truth evaluable (Sperber & Wilson 1986a; 1986b/1995; Carston 2002; Recanati 2003). The secondary level processes are automatic, subconscious and lead to determinate semantic representations. The tertiary level is where distinctions between individual readers can be established since its processes are not automatic but require intentional and interpretive efforts on the part of the reader. This is the level that may recover the literary author’s communicative intention and offer insight into the cultural underpinnings of the text²⁵.

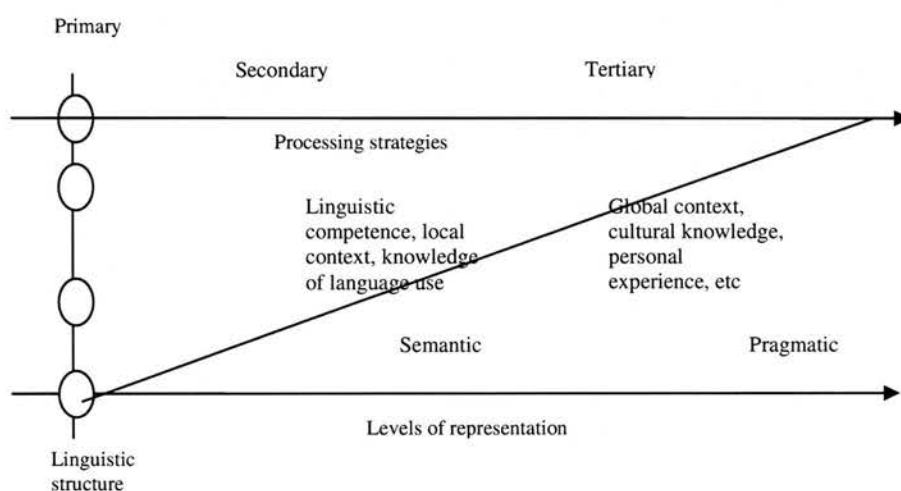
Figure 4.1 presents the interrelationships between linguistic structure and mental representation in literary communication. The upper and lower axes represent processing strategies and levels of representation respectively. Rightward movement on the axes indicates a shift towards higher levels of processing and representation. Correspondences between them are clear: primary processes/linguistic representation, secondary processes/semantic representation; and tertiary

²⁵ What I have identified as the secondary and tertiary levels of processing and representation may be seen as corresponding to what Iser (1978) refers to as the ‘first code’ and ‘second code’ respectively. Iser’s position is that the second code results from the reader submitting the first code to the processes of deciphering. What I intend doing here is to reaffirm Iser’s point that it is from the second code that aesthetic pleasure can be derived.

processes/pragmatic representation. The diagonal line which links the two axes indicates the interface between processing and representation. That is, processes yield representations and representations may trigger further processing.

Briefly, it is important to remind ourselves that recent pragmatic theory (e.g. Carston 2002; Recanati 2003) makes distinctions that correspond with what is being pursued here: (i) primary level processes recover the linguistic structure; (ii) secondary processes involve unconscious sub-personal level activity to generate propositional/semantic meaning; (iii) tertiary level processes involve conscious personal/intentional level activities to recover the pragmatic meaning of the text.

Figure 4.1 Narrative processing & representation



The secondary processes establish the situation described in the text. As the chart shows, to do this requires reader competence in the language of the text, and the use of the local context and general knowledge. Iser (1978: 69) refers to this semantic representation, “the repertoire of the text.”²⁶ He identifies the contents of the

²⁶ Linguists like Recanati (2003, 2002), Carston (2002) and Bach (1996) believe this semantic structure is determinate and objective. They use the notion of availability to explain the determinacy of this structure. Carston in several papers (e.g. 1988/91) has distinguished a level of representation, which she calls explicature. She distinguishes this structure from linguistic structure, which, unlike

repertoire as a selection of norms and allusions, i.e. forms of references to earlier works, socio-historical norms or references to the whole culture from which the text has emerged. The model above provides that readers submit the repertoire of textual norms to pragmatic processing. There is a situation of tension during which readers endeavour to match textual repertoires with their own repertoires of knowledge and norms. As Iser notes, textual norms are lifted from and stripped of their original contexts, i.e. depragmatised by being transplanted into the literary text. In Iser's formulation, the text itself becomes present to the reader as an open event because the importance of the familiar components cannot lie in their familiarity, but in the intention underlying the selection of those components, which is yet to be formulated. The reader is compelled to reduce textual indeterminacies by building a situational frame which implicate not only the text, but also her/his own repertoire of experience and cultural norms. This pragmatic process involves determining the context within which the textual norm can acquire meaning and significance in the new context.

Readers are helped in the process of determination not only by their familiarity with the norms but also by the manner in which textual repertoires are combined. Some combination processes establish either a given-new structure of information transmission, or a ground-figure gestalt of information framing. The reader's presuppositions are crucial in these processes. They need their presuppositions to establish links with the underlying textual schemata. They should not only recognise familiar textual schemata but also recognise textual reconfigurations of familiar schemata. As Iser notes, each schema makes the world accessible in terms of textual conventions but when something new, which is not covered by these schemata is perceived, it can only be represented by means of correction to the schemata. According to Iser it is through this correction that the special experience of the new perception may be captured and conveyed.

the explicature is not truth evaluable, and then from the implicature, which requires access to non-linguistic constituents to recover. The difference between the semantic and pragmatic structures is therefore one between explicature and implicature. The distinctions being made here also correspond with Dolezel's (1998) distinction between the text's intensional representation, which is determinate, and its extensional representation, which is indeterminate.

Readers do not necessarily process texts in a linear fashion, i.e. from primary through secondary to tertiary levels. They tend to go back to the textual repertoire in a feedback loop, which sometimes results in the modification of the cultural template they have been using to assign significance to the textual norm. The evidence of readers involved in a feedback loop and readjusting the interpretive frames is an indication of their awareness that in spite of the many different things they can say about a text it is just not the case that they can say everything about a text. This brings us to the question of control in literary interpretation²⁷. In this study the concern is for the reader's interpretation to be legitimated by the textual repertoire of norms. If those determinate norms are ignored or not thoroughly grasped then interpretation can be problematic. Sometimes readers are unable to retrieve any schema of knowledge that can assign aesthetic value to the textual norm. Iser notes that the optimisation of textual forms depends on the reader's own awareness and his/her willingness to open up to the unfamiliar experience. The extent to which the textual and reader repertoires overlap can help us to formulate criteria for the effect of literary texts. As the processing activity shifts rightward, the reader has to access increasing amounts of extratextual contextual information. The model above depicts the movement to higher levels as a rightward movement. As we move from the unconscious processes of saturation and inferencing within local context towards the intentional conscious processes which access cultural and personal knowledge schemes, textual meaning becomes more and more discriminable and more and more attributable to reader background influences rather than to universal processes of meaning generation.

The distinctions we are pursuing here, especially between semantic level and tertiary level processing, recall Piaget's notions of 'figurative' and 'operative' aspects of intelligence (Muller et al 1998). Piaget's *figurative* aspect of intelligence includes

²⁷ There is support in the literature for some sort of control in literary interpretation. Taha (2002) has noted that Iser, together with Eco and Culler, believes that a literary work can have a range of meaning, but not just any meaning. Iser (1978:25) particularly cautions that the experience of the text is brought about by an interaction that cannot be designated as private or arbitrary. According to Iser, what is private is the reader's incorporation of the text into his own treasure house of experience, but as far as the reader oriented theory is concerned, this simply means that the subjective element of reading comes at a latter stage in the process of comprehension. Iser's latter stage of comprehension is what we have identified here as the pragmatic level of processing.

such functions as perception, imitation and imagery that yield knowledge of states. In contrast, the *operative* aspect of intelligence refers to the transforming and form giving or structuring aspect of knowledge. For Piaget, the operative aspect of intelligence transforms subject-object relationships by inserting the data provided by the figurative functions into increasingly complex structures. In other words the operative activity of the human mind results in the construction of more and more complex relationships (spatial, causal, logical, etc) between the subject and the object. The construction of more powerful knowledge structures takes the form of reconstructing the figurative structures of the previous knowing level within the framework of new operative structures. Piaget's operative structures are constructed by the process of reflective abstraction. Reflective abstraction is a mechanism that each level of knowing abstracts form from content and in turn, projects this form to a higher level of knowing. Thus, forms of stage "*n*" become the contents of stage "*n+1*". With each new higher stage the forms become increasingly abstract.

Piagetian figurative functions may be seen as corresponding to a combination of the primary and secondary processes we have identified here; his operative functions correspond to our tertiary processes. It may be noted that the rightward movement from the linguistic to the semantic structure is automatic and involves subconscious processes. But progression into operative functions is not automatic, just as is predicted by the model we are using here. There are occasions when textual processing terminates at the secondary level, i.e. coming to a close with the construction of figurative or semantic structures. This is when the reader becomes bound to the limits of the environmental/textual stimulus. von Uexkill (1934/1957) (referred to in Muller et al 1998), argued that the stimuli of the environment constitute a rigid barrier, which surrounds the organism like the walls of a house, closing it from the entire world. Overcoming this barrier involves loosening or even cutting all together, the direct tie between the stimulus and the consequent action. This occurs when the reader engages the secondary level structure as the new stimulus to be operated upon, and thereby uses it to construct higher level representations.

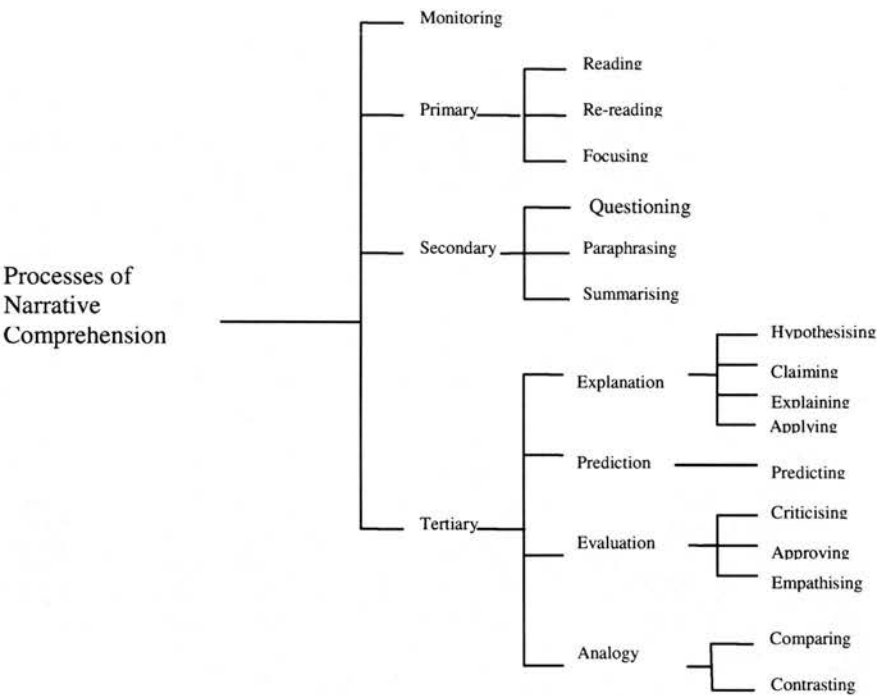
It should be noted however that translation from secondary level representations to tertiary level representations is not merely the application of operative functions of abstraction on figurative structures. In the model presented above, figurative functions are supposed to operate not only on linguistic structure to generate semantic representations but on a combination of linguistic structure and local contextual information. In the same way operative functions combine semantic representation with global contextual information, i.e. personal and cultural knowledge to generate pragmatic level representations. The assumption being made in this study is that information that can be accessed to constitute the global context varies from reader to reader, and that should have effect on the extent to which each reader can mobilise operative functions to construct higher level textual representations, i.e. maintain a rightward progression on the model.

4.4.4. Readers' processing strategies

The next stage was to determine what discourse functions readers were using the bits of texts to perform at each level of processing. It became clear that at the primary level they were reading the text aloud, rereading it or focusing on parts of it. At the secondary level it was realised that readers were paraphrasing or summarising the text. At the tertiary level they were making explanations, claims, predictions, evaluations, etc. It may be noted that all higher level processes implicate lower level processes. A predictive strategy, for instance, may begin with reading the text aloud and paraphrasing it, i.e. proposing a semantic representation for it, and then adopting a reflective stance over the material being paraphrased and using it to anticipate future events. Readers did not have to go through those stages explicitly. They may even make predictions without reading the relevant textual stimulus aloud. But it is legitimate to assume that they may have somehow decoded the text, made a semantic representation for it, before making predictions. It was apparent that at the higher levels of involvement, readers were using information from the global context or from extratextual sources to clarify current text or that they were using current text to clarify something within the global context of the text or even some extratextual situation. It was also realised that in addition to those interactive processes, readers

were also engaged in metacognitive processes in which they monitored their comprehension activities, i.e. assessing how they were faring with the reading

Figure 4.2: Processes of narrative comprehension



activity or merely keeping track of already processed information. Figure 4.2 graphically summarises the levels and types of processes readers were involved in. A system of categories was therefore constructed based on the discourse activities readers were performing at those levels. The following are examples of categories at the different levels of processing, and directions as to how to identify and code them.

Level: Primary

Category: Rereading

Code: (Reread)

Description: Readers sometimes make additional passes of the text repeating the exact lexical and syntactic form. Whenever there is any lexical or syntactic reformulation of the text this code may not be applied.

Example²⁸:. They dug the older graves into the hillside, marking them with marbles and sand stone/

They dug the older graves into the hillside. / Well older graves./

Level: Secondary

Category: Paraphrasing

Code: (Para)

Description: This is when the surface textual content is reformulated into a new lexical and syntactic structure. This category covers segments in which readers offer definitions of some lexical items and try to recover their senses. A segment may not be coded as a paraphrase if it contains any inference that may have been sourced either extratextually or from another part of the text.

Example: *Help us to be good to each other. / That suggests she is talking about society / Just everyone. / Be with us. / She is asking for people to be good to each other/*

Level: Tertiary

Category: Evaluating

Code: (Eval)

Description: These segments express readers' assessment of a narrative character or situation. These are meant to indicate the reader's (dis)approval, criticisms, or commendations

Example: *There are seven other families above them and she doesn't have the energy to talk her way through that. She is after all a small woman. / She starts muttering and she asks God to help everyone else, which is selfless. In that sense she is selfless. / You would admire her moral for doing that. / But in that sense she seems to get it all wrong when she thinks she cannot pray in a flat and she needs to be in a cemetery and seven other families apparently blocking the way. / She doesn't have the energy to talk her way through that. / It is not that you have to talk harder or louder to get to God to listen./*

4.4.5. Readers' representational structures

The next stage was to develop a classification system for the knowledge structures which readers were accessing and/or generating. The process began with an attempt to monitor the contents of reader responses, i.e. the objects of their narrative experiences. It became obvious they were talking about the characters in the texts, their surroundings, thoughts and feelings, relationships with other characters and the

²⁸ In all the examples, segments identified as reading aloud from textual stimulus are presented in italics to distinguish them from the other data which we are assuming to be reader turns in the interaction. The illustrative text for the particular category is underlined.

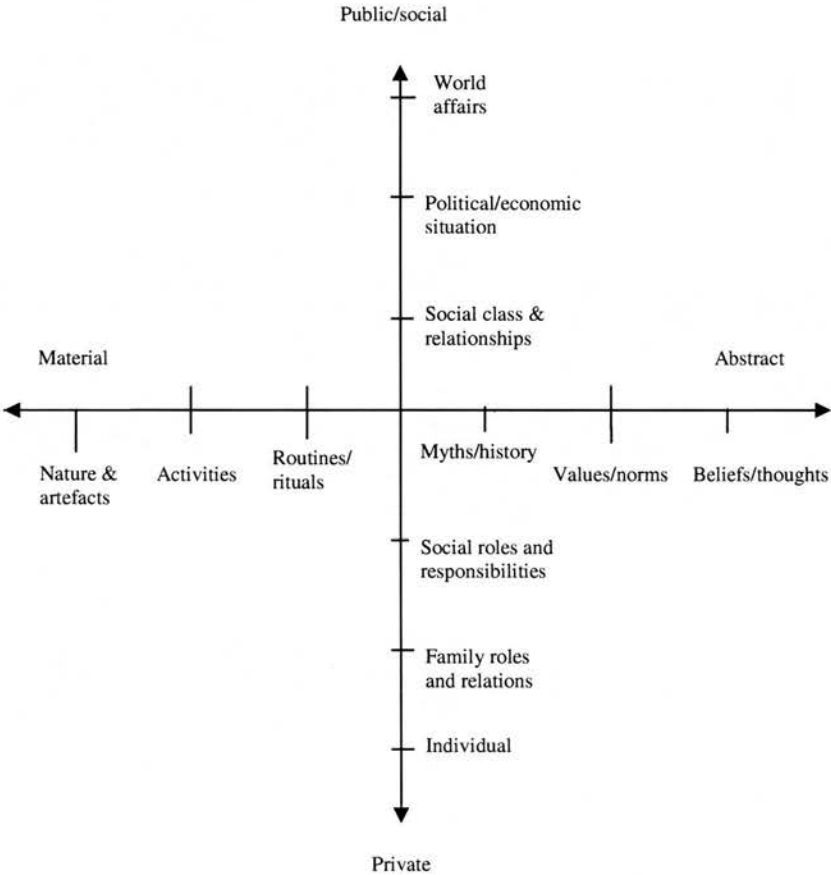
domestic and public situations that affect their lives. Readers tended to attribute beliefs, motives, and emotions to characters. There seemed to be reader preoccupation with both the internal and external landscapes of characters' lives. The content of readers' protocols more or less defined a text world (Werth 1999). This world was projected with certain coordinates of time and space, were populated with individuals who were definable by certain physical, mental, domestic and social boundaries, were engaged in certain activities and relationships, and were influenced by certain norms, values, beliefs and worldviews.

These insights led to the development of an experiential model of narrative comprehension. The model is in the form of a grid with two axes (see figure 4.3). There is a horizontal axis, which forms a continuum of readers' experience of material-abstract phenomena. The vertical axis links readers' experience of the purely private lives of characters to what may be considered to be public affairs. As the material-abstract axis is interposed on the private-public axis, there is formed a grid of four quadrants, upon which every conceivable narrative experience can be plotted. It is postulated, for instance, that while values and norms are abstractions from myths and history, routines and rituals are material instantiations of those myths and history. With the vertical axis, defining from bottom to the top, the private-public continuum begins with the physical body of the individual, because that is where we may with certainty place a boundary between the self and the other. As we move up the continuum, such boundaries become more and more indistinct, until the individual becomes entirely merged into the public and then within the wider affairs of the world.

When they were processing the Scottish text, for example, readers spent some time talking about a secret meeting between the main character, Jean, and someone they identified to be her boss at the work place. It appeared to some readers that what was going on was a meeting between people who had some sort of sexual relationship between them, and they spent time filling in the details of such an encounter. This kind of representation can be plotted on the bottom left quadrant, at the intersection between "Family roles" and "Activities", i.e. the characters are projected as engaged

in something materially related to family relationships. Some readers saw this meeting in terms of a boss-worker relationship and emphasised the social inequality of the persons involved in this kind of meeting. They got concerned with such social and material issues as control and resistance. This representation can be plotted on the upper left quadrant at the intersection of “Activities” and “Social class and

Figure 4.3: Experiential grid for narrative comprehension



relationships”. When readers got to know that the woman, Jean, was already married, some of them started talking about such abstractions as marital fidelity and chastity. Some of them were appalled by the woman’s behaviour and criticised her for treating herself so cheaply. These readers had effectively moved the episode to the lower right quadrant, and located it at the intersection between “Family roles and relations” and “Values and norms”. Furthermore, some readers made additional

abstractions from the incident and took the occasion to talk about the immorality and violence related to class distinctions and social stratification. This moved the discussion to the upper right quadrant and placed it at the intersection between “Social class” and “Values and norms.”

The following are examples of categories of narrative experience.

Category: Activity

Code: (ACT)

Description: This code accounts for the events and episodes of the narrative. Narrative activity has the features of causality and consequence. Readers tend to keep track of what characters are doing or what is generally going on in the narrative world.

Example: *He separates the pages of this evening's paper / Crumbling them; the crunching sound of the paper full of adverts good stories and bad stories / And rolls them and twists them for the fire / So they do have a fire. / That again is a warm image. / I think he is waiting for her to come back and trying to make the flat a bit nice and comfortable for her.*

Category: Personal Background

Code: (PBI)

Description: This code is applied to references to the ethnic and social origin of the character. All statements that describe the character's perceived family background, education, skills, occupations, etc, are put under this category. Some characters may be identified as immigrants, unemployed, married, professionals, rich or elderly.

Example: *On cloudy nights she doesn't bother and there is no point praying in the flat. There are seven families above them / And that suggests she is not that wealthy. She is doesn't own her house. / Flats are usually quite small compared to houses. / So she, I can imagine, does not have a lot of money.*

Category: Belief systems

Code: (BST)

Description: This category is reserved for those segments that express readers' references to the religious and/or other ideological views which underlie social life and reality. Such beliefs may be held privately by an individual character or by a whole community. It should be noted that it is references to beliefs that may be given this code and not the individual who holds those beliefs.

Example: *Her husband, you know has already died. So three months ago she packed all she had and came here to squat by her ancestral hearth.*

Hearths are like what you associate with kinship values. / People bond through the hearth /.
Hearth is where you cook and you feed people. / People who are like strangers eat and you
create a bond, which is like a family. / And you create a physical bond by eating the same
stuff, and cooking for people. / And unless you feel like a bond with ancestral hearth, maybe
that is her means of communicating with the ancestors./

Briefly, the scheme being developed here seeks to capture readers' narrative experience. There were identified five main categories of representation: *Character Descriptions, Social Reality, Setting, Personal Human Relations and Activity*. The first three were further divided into a number of subcategories each. These were:

- (a) *Character Descriptions*: (i) Physical Descriptions. (ii) Personal Background Information, (iii) Cognitive and Affective Situation (iv) Character Attitudes and Behaviour, (v) Character Life Situation.
- (b) *Social Reality*: (i) Occupations and Public Routines of Life, (ii) Class Structure and Tension, (iii) Ethnic and Historical Facts, (iv) Social and Religious Performances, (v) Belief Systems, (vi) Moral and Value Systems.
- (c) *Setting*: (i) Temporal and Spatial Setting, (ii) Human and Domestic Surroundings, (iii) Mood and Atmosphere.

(See Appendix 13 for definitions of all the categories of knowledge representation, illustrative material from the data and coding guide).

4.4.6. Interaction between Process and Content Categories

As may be expected, process categories interact with content categories. This is what actually creates hierarchy in mental representation. For example, suppose a boy from the north meets a girl from the south in a field and they begin the processes of courtship. This activity may be plotted lower left quadrant of the experiential grid, at the intersection between family relations and activity. If all the reader can do is to fill in the details of the material activity of holding hands, embracing and probably kissing, and exchanging other tokens of love, they may be doing only shallow level processing, merely creating Iser's first code of literary representation. If on the other hand the reader is able to translate this purely material activity into the

abstract realm of ideas, by recognising the semiotic values of boy from the north and girl from the south, and begins to talk about their meeting in terms of the breaking of social barriers and prejudice and the triumph of love over hatred, they will thereby be inscribing a springing arc on the grid, which translates the experience from the bottom left quadrant to the upper right quadrant, resulting in the creation of Iser's second code of literary representation. In Piagetian language, they would have submitted a purely figurative structure to operative functions of abstraction and would have created new knowledge. This is how hierarchy and complexity of representation in narrative processing come about.

4.4.7. Distinctions from existing schemes

The coding system being developed here differs from the most influential systems in the literature in a number of major respects. In the first place, most coding systems, like those used by the HCRC (Carletta et al 1997) in coding the map task dialogues, and by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) for the analysis of classroom discourse, are meant to distinguish discourse structure. The thrust, for them, was to account for the structure of information flow and the establishment of mutuality and common ground in the exchange of ideas. The objective in this study however is first, to access the reading strategies readers deploy to make sense of narrative texts, and second, to account for the representations they generate. Even though there seems to be some kind of information management on the side of readers as they interact with the text, the manifest interest here is in the type of processes which readers adopt and representations they construct.

This research also departs from the practice in current reading research (e.g. Pressley & Afflerbach 1995) in not being limited to developing coding schemes for cognitive strategies only, but in developing a coding system for readers' mental representations as well. The system for coding mental representation is necessary for this research because the research interest in this study is particularly, to access readers' cultural presuppositions in order to find out how those schemes of knowledge and beliefs influence processing strategies.

4.5. Code validity and reliability test

In the development of a coding system for qualitative data analysis, issues of validity (the question of whether the categories actually represent the issues raised in subjects' descriptions) are very important. Apart from the fact that categories in qualitative data tend to be fuzzy, there is the likelihood of theoretical concerns overturning the weight of empirical evidence. Dey (1993) indicates that creating categories is both an empirical and conceptual challenge. That means categories must relate to an appropriate analytic context and be at the same time rooted in relevant empirical material. Dey cautions that categories that seem 'fine' in theory may not fit the data; and categories that fit the data may be no good if they cannot relate to wider conceptual context. In this research the temptation to arbitrarily impose pre-existing categories on the data was resisted. There were efforts made to ground categories in the data.

Another research concern relating to the development of coding schemes has to do with the reliability of the research instrument, that is, the question whether the instrument can very well be used in other situations and contexts. Matters arising from this have to do with the clarity of definitions of classification criteria and coding guidelines. It is mainly because of concerns such as this that Durbin et al (2000) automatised coding for story recall. But the kind of text they used in their research was so simplified that their procedure cannot be of any benefit to the present study.

There are several tests for reliability available in the literature (see Carletta et al 1997). Krippendorff (1980) particularly identifies three different tests of reliability: tests for stability, reproducibility, and inter-coder accuracy. The test for reliability used in this research is a variation of the reproducibility test. In view of the extensiveness of the data and financial constraints, one reader's protocol data were selected as a representative sample and given to a colleague to code. She was only given the coding guidelines, encouraged to read the experimental texts and then

asked to code the segmented data. It must be remembered that the data being studied in this study is in no way like the simplified and controlled data of AI and cognitive science. Coders need to keep a lot of contextual information in mind to be able to correctly assess the class of experience or processing strategy represented in the bit of data. Agreement between the researcher and the colleague was just above 70% for processing strategies, but only marginally above 60% for knowledge representations. It became obvious in a follow-up discussion that the colleague was not keeping contextual information in view in a lot of instances. She was then given another reader's comprehension data to code for content categories. Agreement on this occasion was a rather high 73%.

Conclusion

This study, as a qualitative inquiry, focuses specifically on the reader knowledge and belief systems and the extent to which those systems influence the processes of narrative comprehension. Attempts to restrict and control readers' verbal descriptions were minimal, or entirely avoided. The objective was, as much possible, to fully access readers' lived experience. But there is also the recognition of limitations of qualitative procedures, especially when it comes to making precise distinctions among categories of experience. To avoid problems associated with fuzziness of distinctions the data was systematically classified by use of criteria developed with direct reference to and close examination of the data. The isolation of individual complexes of knowledge and processes should make the creation of profiles for individuals and groups not a matter of mere intuition or feel but by means of measurable criteria.

The scheme developed here seems to have a number of advantages over most of the existing schemes in the literature. In the first place, it is a novelty that a coding scheme for narrative comprehension should have a component for categories of knowledge. Additionally, existing schemes (e.g. Pressley & Afflerbach 1995; Green 1998) have been developed as if reading comprehension was a uni-level activity and that all mental operations were of the same order. This scheme is different in

providing for hierarchy in narrative processing and mental representation. Finally even though the coding scheme was primarily developed to account for the data collected for this study, it is likely to be useable (probably with slight modifications) in accounting for the comprehension of narrative texts in general.

Chapter 5: The analyses of readers’ processing strategies

5.1. Introduction

The data collection procedures used in this research gave readers the opportunity to respond as fully as they can to narrative texts by drawing on their personal and cultural experiences, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, etc, to make their individual and personal responses to the texts. In the last chapter I referred to the suspicion in the literature that data obtained through such uncontrolled verbalisations may lack the precision required to make the distinctions necessary in a cross-cultural study like the present one. I therefore indicated the need to combine qualitative and quantitative procedures in the analysis. It is for this reason that the data has been submitted to reduction processes which are standard in content analysis: (i) segmenting the data into idea units, (ii) developing explicit coding schemes with specific conditions under which each verbal unit is to be coded and providing typical examples of each category; (iii) employing at least two coders (in the present case the researcher and a colleague, who coded selected samples for validation of categories), (iv) calculating the co-efficient of inter-coder agreement. These reductive measures were meant to make it possible for the data to be submitted to frequency counts so that quantitative procedures can be applied in the measurement of degrees of similarity and differences between the groups of readers who participated in the research.

Frequency counts of textual units and quantification of aspects of the analysis of verbal data has become quite common in the study of comprehension processes. Hunt (1996) has noted that quantitative and qualitative approaches are not the polar opposites they are often made out to be and that they should best be seen as complementary metaphors with each informing the other. The objective in such cases of triangulation, as Chi (1997) notes, is to access the advantages each

procedure provides. She indicates that quantitative and qualitative methods may be integrated in different ways:

- (a) Using qualitative data to help interpret quantitative results;
- (b) Using qualitative methods along with quantitative measures with one confirming the other;
- (c) Using qualitative analysis as a backdrop for generating hypothesis, which may be tested by experimental methods;
- (d) The last method, used in verbal analysis, is relying strictly on qualitative data but quantifying the analysis.

In this study the preferred option is to rely strictly on qualitative data, reduce the data with the view to submitting it to frequency counts and quantitative analyses, and in addition, applying qualitative procedures for in-depth analyses.

There are many different quantitative (parametric and non-parametric) approaches used in the literature as part of the analysis of the literary process. These include the use of percentages to determine the rate at which readers use specific levels of processing (Halasz et al 2002; Graves 2000), the use of factor analysis to determine the correlation of certain variables in readers' comprehension data to particular modes of reading (Braun & Cupchik 2000), and the use of cluster analysis to determine the description of specific classes of experience (Kuiken et al 1989). Ibsch and Schreier (2001) employed multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) to explore relationships among variables as a reductive procedure preceding the application of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA).

In this study quantitative analyses can be used to measure the extent to which readers' cultural origin (the group factor) and the origin of the reading material (the text factor) influence their cognitive strategies. The analysis is to establish whether or not variation in cognitive strategies and representation resulting from group membership and the administration of the different texts are strong enough to support the view that the distinctions between the groups and between the texts are statistically significant. A common parametric procedure used to compare group differences is the *t-test*, which assesses the statistical significance of the difference

between two independent samples *or* two dependent samples. But when it comes to the test of two or more independent samples over two or more dependent samples, the most probable choice is the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The ANOVA also has the facility to manipulate two or more variables at the same time (Coolican 1999). It may be noted however that in this research the effects of the factors are being evaluated against several dependent variables distinguished as categories of experience or processing strategies. ANOVA tests may only handle one dependent variable at a time. One way out may be to perform separate tests for each processing strategy or category of experience. But Hair et al (1999) have noted that multiple ANOVA tests inflate the overall *Type I* error rate, i.e. the probability of seeing a difference when in fact there is none, and thus invalidating part of the results.

It seems therefore that if there is the need to do parametric analyses in this study the MANOVA is the most suitable procedure to yield the distinctions we are looking for. Hair et al (ibid) explain that MANOVA is an extension of ANOVA to accommodate more than one dependent variable. They explain that the distinction between univariate and multivariate measures applies to the use of either a single or multiple dependent measures. This is what distinguishes ANOVA from MANOVA. With MANOVA there are actually two variates: one for the independent variables and another for the dependent variables. The unique aspect of MANOVA is that the variate optimally combines multiple dependent measures into a single value that maximises differences among groups. It seems therefore that the MANOVA test offers unique possibilities to this study. In a single test it is possible to assess differences between the groups and treatments over several variables, while also assessing the nature of the interaction between the groups and the treatments.

Since the focus of this study is on both readers' use of processing strategies and their mental representations, the analysis of readers' data will be done in two parts. This chapter will be concerned with processing strategies while their resulting mental representations will be dealt with in the next chapter. The use of parametric procedures in an analysis requires the prior identification of manifest distinctions in the data. The quantitative analysis will therefore begin with informal processes of

data exploration and description, focusing on data sizes, patterns of distribution, centralising tendencies and ranges of differences. If this exercise leads the identification of likely differences between the groups of readers then parametric measures will be applied to test the significance of such differences. The qualitative analysis will follow the quantitative procedures. The focus will be on the different ways in which readers use cultural presuppositions and personal knowledge to construct fictional representations.

5.2. Quantitative analyses

In interest of parsimony and ease of analysis, processing categories will be identified in terms of the levels at which they occur. This gives us three dependent variables for the analysis: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels of processing. To these will be added Monitoring Activities, and Misreadings, that is, errors which occur as a result of inattention, processing confusion, wrong identification of referential items, or blatant inability to follow what is going on, i.e. elements of the determinate textual repertoire that readers got wrong²⁹. For the purposes of the analyses, there was developed a matrix of reader scores based on the frequency counts of their use of the respective categories, i.e. numerical values were assigned to each reader's use of the categories that have been identified for the analysis by computing the number of times they used each of those categories. This process was eased by the use of Microsoft Access programme to sort the duly coded data into the respective categories. (Refer Appendices 8, 9 and 10 for data displays of scores).

5.2.1. Data summary and exploration

This section is devoted to data exploration and summarisation. The exercise is to look closely at the characteristics of the data in an attempt to find out if there are any relationships between the variables, and if they exhibit specific patterns which indicate possible similarities within the groups or differences between them. I will

²⁹ It should be justifiable to suppose that if the reader's grasp of the semantic structure is inadequate or misconceived, then interpretation constructed upon such structures could be problematic.

proceed by examining group data sizes and then explore the nature of data distribution by focusing on centralising tendencies and dispersion within the data sets.

5.2.1.1. Group data size and distribution

Figure 6.1 is a dot plot, which graphs the distribution of total scores for the Scottish text (Text 1). It may be noticed from the graph that nine out the ten members of the British group (Group 1) have scores in excess of 400, while only one member of the Ghanaian group (Group 2) has a score above the 400 mark. Eight Group 2 members scored below 320 points. From the graph, the characteristic region for Group 1 is between 480 and 560, while for Group 2 it is between 200 and 240. The graph shows that apart from one person, every Ghanaian reader scored a mark below that of every British reader.

Figure 5.1 Dot plot for Text 1 scores

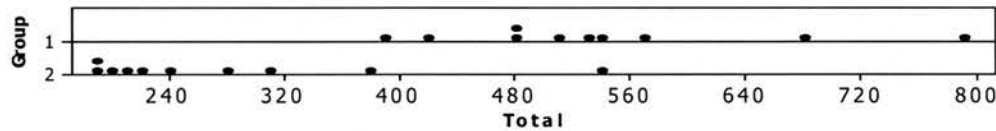
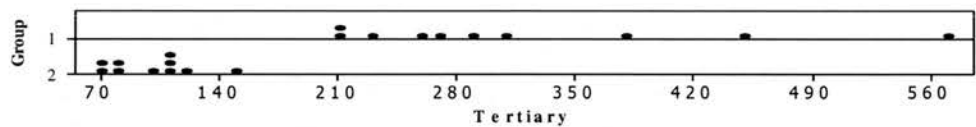


Figure 5.2 presents the frequency distribution of scores for tertiary processes. As the graph shows, every Group 1 member scored 210 or more, with three of them going well beyond 350. Group 2 subjects on the other hand are huddled between 70 to just above 140 points. The distributions of scores in the two graphs suggest that not only did Group 1 members produce more extensive responses to the text; they used more tertiary level processes than members of the other group did.

Figure 5.2: Dot plot of Tertiary scores for Text 1



The picture is generally not all that different with the Ghanaian text (Text 2). Figure 5.3 graphs readers' total scores for that text. It may be noted that Group 1 still generated bigger data sizes than Group 2, even though the differences here are not as extensive as they were with Text 1. Four Group 1 readers actually scored below 450 in this case, and none of them scored 700 points. Nine of the Group 2 members actually scored more than 300 points, with four of them making either 400 or more. The graph also shows that two Group 2 readers overlapped with many Group 1 readers; only three Group 1 members obtained higher scores than all Group 2 readers.

Figure 5.3: Dot plot of Total scores for Text 2

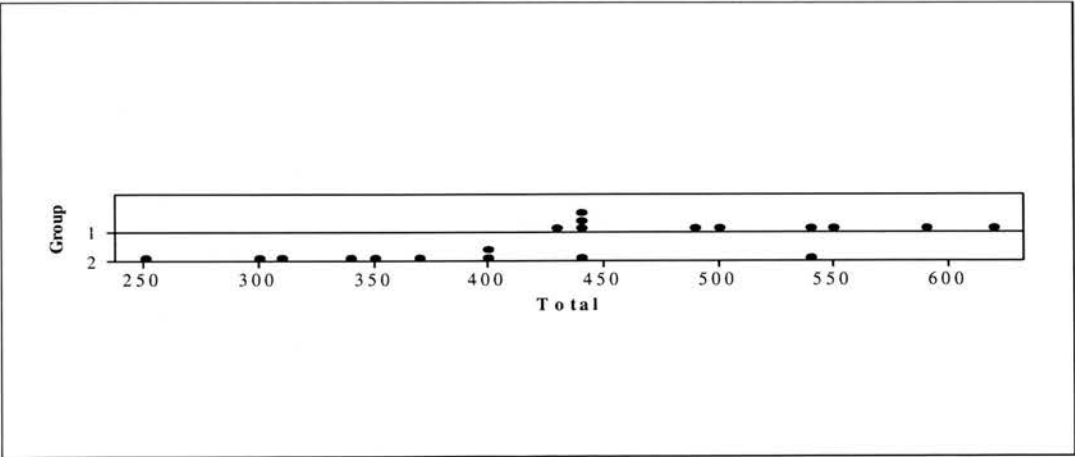
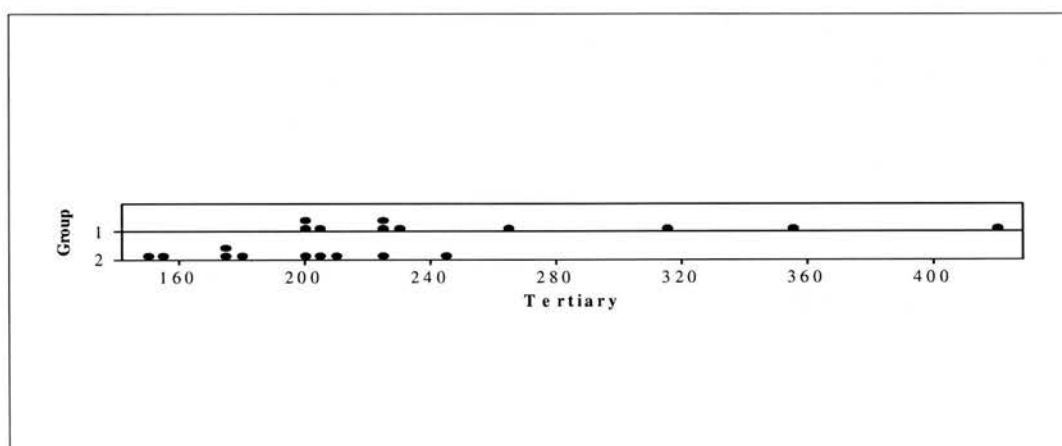


Figure 5.4 shows tertiary scores for Text 2. Note that that even though Group 1 readers generally got higher tertiary scores than Group 2 readers, they did not do as well as they did with Text 1. Also even though Group 2 still obtained lower scores than Group 1, they got higher scores with this text than they did with Text 1. Four Group 1 readers obtained higher tertiary scores than all Group 2 readers. Five Group 2 readers had their tertiary scores overlapping with the scores of six Group 1 readers. The other five Group 2 readers had scores lower than every Group 1 reader. It may be noted that Group 1 scores for Text 1 were more widely distributed than their scores for Text 2. Their total scores for Text 1 range from under 400 to just a little less than 800. Their total scores for Text 2 on the other hand range from about 430 to 620. With tertiary level strategies, Group 1 scores for Text 1 spread from 210 to just above 560. Their tertiary scores for Text 2 ranged between just under 200 to around 420. On the other hand Group 2 scores seem more spread for Text 2 than for Text 1. While their total scores for Text 1 ranged between 200 and something less than 320, their scores for Text 2 ranged from 250 to nearly 550. Group 2 tertiary scores for

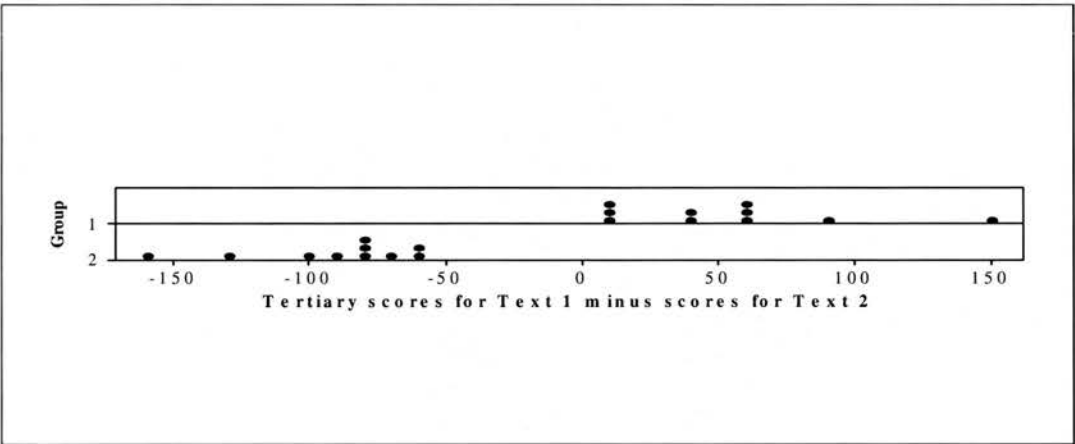
Figure 5.4: Dot plot of Tertiary processes for Text 2



Text 1 are clustered closely together, with dots mapped on other dots, between 70 and just above 140; their tertiary scores for Text 2 spreads from about 150 to more than 240. One pattern that seems to emerge is that the scores of each group are more

spread for the text closer to their cultural background than for the text culturally further from them.

Figure 5.5. Dotplot of differences between tertiary scores



It would be helpful at this point to compare the groups' tertiary scores for the two texts. Figure 5.5 makes this comparison. Scores for Text 2 are subtracted from scores for Text 1. The graph shows positive values for every member of Group 1 and negative values for every member of Group 2. This simply indicates that every Group 1 reader generated more tertiary values for Text 1 than they did for Text 2, just as every Group 2 reader generated more tertiary scores for Text 2 than they did for Text 1. This pattern suggests that each group used more tertiary level processing strategies for the text closer to their cultural background than they did for the text further from their cultural background.

We have so far been looking at group differences for total and tertiary scores. It is necessary now to find out the proportional variation of scores at each of the levels in the analysis. Table 5.1 presents these scores. The comparisons being made in the discussion describe the changes in scores that occur with the shift from Text 1 to Text 2. 'Monitoring' activities retain almost the same ratio for Group 1 (10.5% and 10.4%) while Group 2 registers a slight drop in the use of this activity (12.4% to 9.6%). Also, there is no real proportional change for Group 1 in their use of Primary processes (19.8% and 18.6%), but the use by Group 2 of this level of processing plummets from 21.6% to 8.0%. The use of secondary processes by Group 1 readers

Table 5.1: Group scores at different levels of processing

<i>Text</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Monitoring</i>		<i>Primary</i>		<i>Secondary</i>		<i>Tertiary</i>		<i>Misreading</i>		<i>Total</i>
		Score	% of Total	Score	% of Total	Score	% of Total	Score	% of Total	Score	% of Total	
1	1	556	10.4	1063	19.8	564	10.5	3182	59.3	8	0.1	5365
	2	343	12.4	596	21.6	714	25.8	999	36.1	112	4.1	2764
2	1	527	10.5	934	18.6	910	18.1	2648	52.8	19	0.4	5019
	2	354	9.6	297	8.0	1085	29.3	1920	51.8	49	1.3	3705

take a good rise from 10.5% to 18.1%. The use of secondary level processes by Group 2 rise from the already high level of 25.8% to 29.3%. Group 2 used 1.3 times more secondary level processes for Text 1 than Group 1 did. They again made greater use of that level of strategies with Text 2 than Group 1 readers (1.2 times). The number of 'Misreadings' also presents an interesting pattern. While Group 1 'Misreadings' rose from 0.1% to 0.4%, Group 2 misreading dropped from 4.1% to 1.3%. The general picture from these patterns of scores seems to be that while Group 1 readers approached both texts in more or less the same way, except for the use of secondary level processing, the style of Group 2 readers shifted from the preponderant use of lower level strategies with Text 1 to the greater use of higher level processes with Text 2.

It seems legitimate at this point to focus some attention on tertiary processes and find out what patterns may emerge from the distribution of scores among its sub-processes. The most frequently used processing strategies at the tertiary level are 'Hypothesising', 'Claiming' and 'Explaining'. These three strategies are well represented in every reader's profile; the other processes have scanty scores and even zero score in some cases. It seems convenient for the analysis therefore, to put all those other tertiary processes (i.e. Applying, Predicting, Approving, Criticising, Empathising, Comparing, Contrasting), together under one heading and label it 'Other processes'. Table 5.2 presents the raw and percentage group scores for the different sub-processes. The Group 1 use of other processes fell from 11.6% of all tertiary processes to 7.1%. The use of 'Other' processes by Group 2 readers rose from the minimal 2.2% to 14%. Also, while there was a minimal decline of the use of 'Explaining' among Group 1 readers (6.1% to 4.1%), there was a phenomenal rise

in the use of that strategy by Group 2 readers (8.8% to 37% of all tertiary processes).

Table 5.2: Scores for tertiary level processing strategies

<i>Text</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Hypothesising</i>		<i>Claiming</i>		<i>Explaining</i>		<i>Other</i>		<i>Total</i>
		Score	% of Total	Score	% of Total	Score	% of Total	Score	% of Total	
Scottish (Text 1)	1	757	23.8	1851	58.2	202	6.3	372	11.6	3182
	2	214	21.4	675	67.6	88	8.8	22	2.2	999
Ghanaian (Text 2)	1	821	31.0	1531	57.8	109	4.1	187	7.1	2648
	2	222	11.6	708	36.9	721	37.6	269	14.0	1920

Furthermore Group 1 obtained 2.3 times ‘Explaining’ scores than Group 2 with Text 1. With Text 2, Group 2 generated 6.6 times more ‘Explaining’ scores than Group 1. The table shows that the proportion of Group 1 ‘Claims’ scores did not change much between the two texts (58.2% to 57.8%). But with Group 2 readers there was a good degree of change (67.6% to 36.9%). Also, while Group 1 readers increased their use of ‘Hypothesising’ from 23.8% to 31.0%, Group 2 reduced the proportion of their use of this strategy from 21.4% to 11.6. The pattern seems to be that each group used more Claims, Explanations and Other processes for the culturally proximal text than they did for the culturally distant text. In contrast they used proportionally more Hypotheses for the culturally distant text than they did for the culturally proximal text.

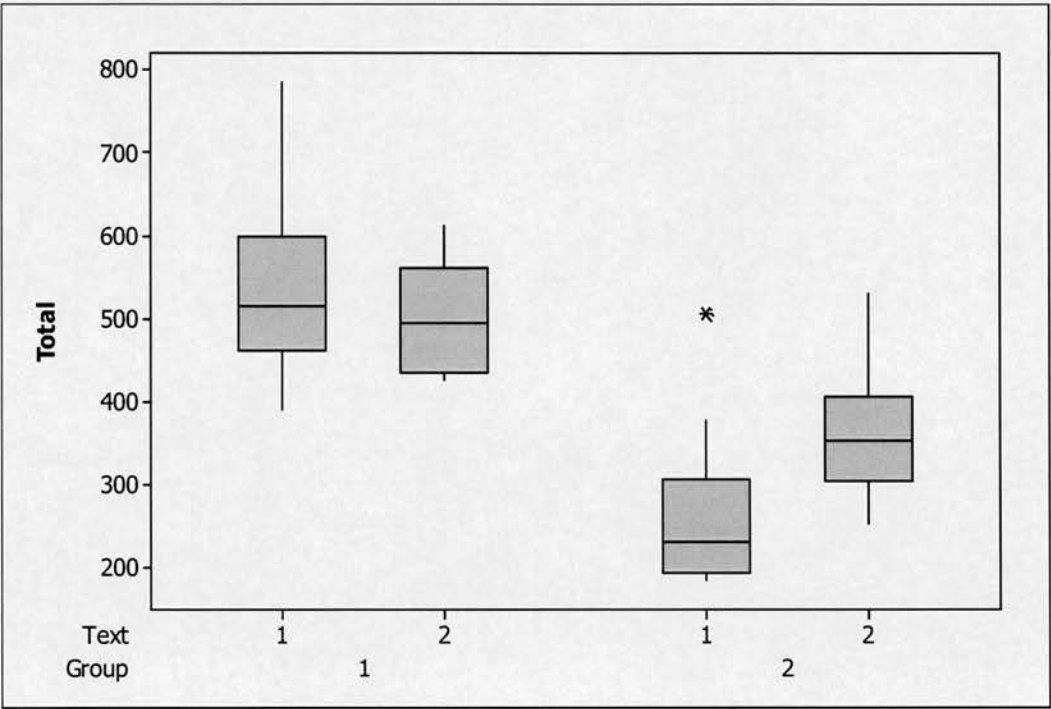
5.2.1.2. Centralising tendencies and dispersion

We may use a box plot to explore centralising tendencies and dispersal in our data set. A box plot gives a display of approximate interquartile range of the data and a view of its extremities (Coolican 1999). Figure 5.6 presents box plots of total scores for the two texts. The rectangles indicate the interquartile spread for each group’s scores.

The lines below and above the boxes (the whiskers) respectively map values below 25% and above 75% of scores. The mean value is supposed to be mapped exactly through the middle of the box. The thin black lines running through the boxes are

the median values. Values in the data set are uniformly distributed when the median line runs through the middle of the box, i.e. coincides with the mean value. It may be noticed that in the plots below some median lines do not exactly run through the

Figure 5.6: Box plot of Total scores 1

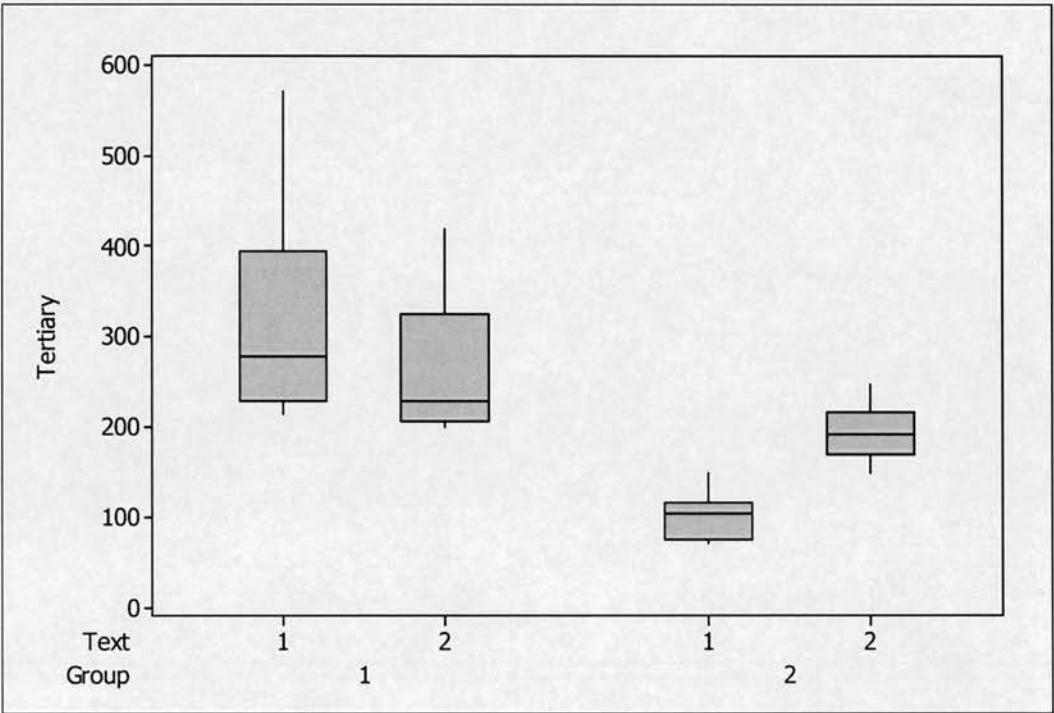


midsection of their boxes. The plots for Text 2 seem to have the median lines running through the middle of their boxes. This suggests that scores for Text 2 are more uniformly distributed for both groups than scores for Text 1. Additionally it may be noticed that the Group 1's plot for Text 1 has longer whiskers both above the box and below it than they have for Text 2. The reverse is the case for Group 2. The asterisk on top of the plot for Group 2 is an extreme value. It shows that the text which was closer to the readers' cultural background obtained more dispersed scores than the text which was further from them. There appears, in addition, to be closer clustering of values below the median value than above it for all the data sets, indicating a certain degree of imbalance in the data sets.

Group distinctions may be recognised from the relative elevations of the boxes in

their plots. It may be noted that there is a big gap between the groups' respective boxes for Text 1. The gap between the Text 2 boxes is not as big. However neither pairs of boxes actually overlap. This suggests that with regards to subjects' total scores for both texts, the two groups seem to have been drawn from different populations. The box plots also enable comparisons to be made with regards to the effect of the change of the reading text (the treatment). While there is no overlap

Figure 5.7: Box lot of Tertiary scores



between the two boxes for Group 2, the boxes for Group 1 make a good overlap. This suggests that while the two treatments may have presented very different reading situations for Group 2, there might not have been so much of a difference for Group 1. Figure 5.7, which graphs tertiary scores, seems to present the same picture as figure 5.6. It may be noticed however that Group 1 has bigger boxes with longer whiskers on top of the boxes, than Group 2. This indicates greater variability and imbalance in their data sets for tertiary scores. It seems therefore that with regards to tertiary scores Group 2, rather than Group 1, forms a more homogeneous population. As was the case with their total scores, Group 1 boxes for tertiary scores occupy higher elevations than those for Group 2 and this indicates that Group 1 used more

tertiary level processes for both texts than Group 2 did.

Figure 5.8: Box plot for secondary scores

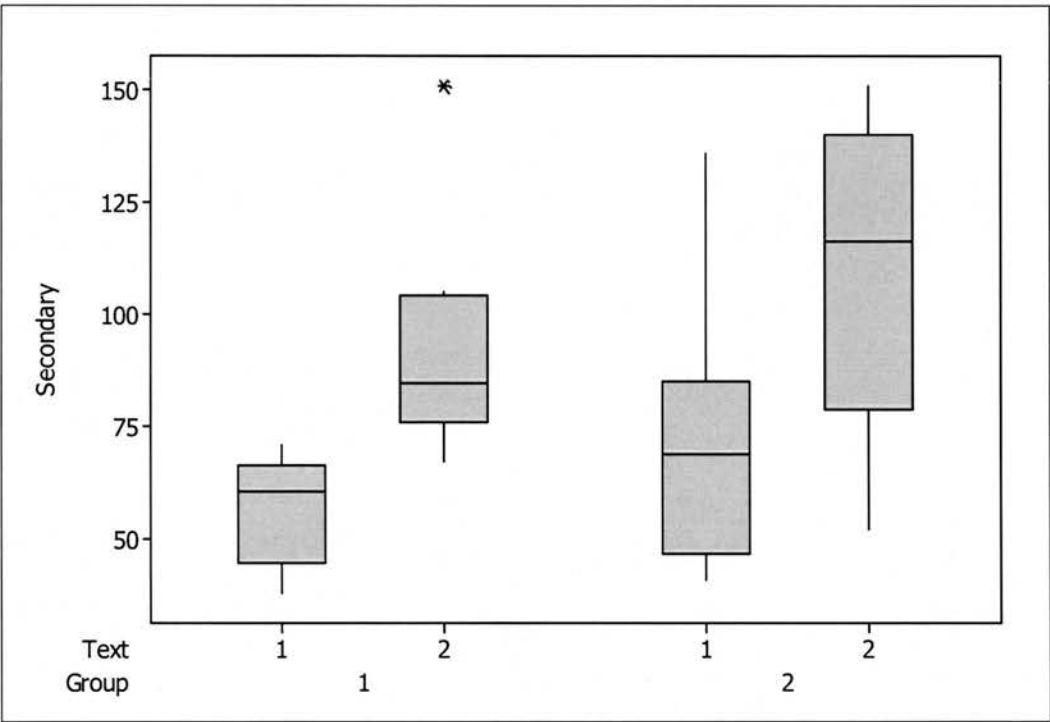


Figure 5.8 represents the groups' use of secondary level processing strategies. It may be noticed that Group 2 boxes occupy higher elevations than Group 1 boxes for either text. It may also be noted that the boxes for Group 1 do not overlap; it is those for Group 2 that strongly overlap in this case. Group 1 seem to have been constrained to use more secondary level strategies with Text 2 than they had to do with Text 1. In addition, the pairs of boxes for the respective texts strongly overlap. This is an indication that in contrast to the situation with total and tertiary scores, when it came to secondary level scores the two groups do not seem to be very different.

The use of box plot to explore centralising tendencies and dispersion in the data sets gives us mixed signals. The two groups look different as far as total and tertiary level scores are concerned but they did not differ in their use of secondary level processes. It is however clear that Group 1 scored higher total and tertiary points

than Group 2 for both texts, i.e. for both the culturally proximal and distant texts. Another batch of mixed observations has to do with the spread of values within the data sets. It seems that texts which were culturally closer to the readers evoked greater variability than texts that were culturally distant from them. But it seems that there was greater variability in the total and tertiary scores for Group 1 than there was for Group 2. It seems also that the two treatments presented totally different reading experiences for Group 2, while for Group 1 there was not that much change. But when it comes to secondary processes it appears it was Group 1 and not Group 2 that took the treatments differently. It is difficult at this point to be definitive as to whether the groups or treatments were different or not all that different. There is the need for formal inferential tests to clarify the situation. But before this can go ahead the data should be tested against the assumptions of multivariate analysis.

5.2.2. Testing the assumptions of multivariate analysis

Testing research data against the assumptions of multivariate analysis is integral to the process of data exploration and summary. The importance of the process is in the fact that violations of those assumptions may lead to serious distortions and invalid and erroneous conclusions (Lewis 2004). In this section I will discuss the two most important assumptions of multivariate analysis: normality of distribution and equality of variances, and then test the research data against those assumptions.

5.2.2.1. The assumption of normality

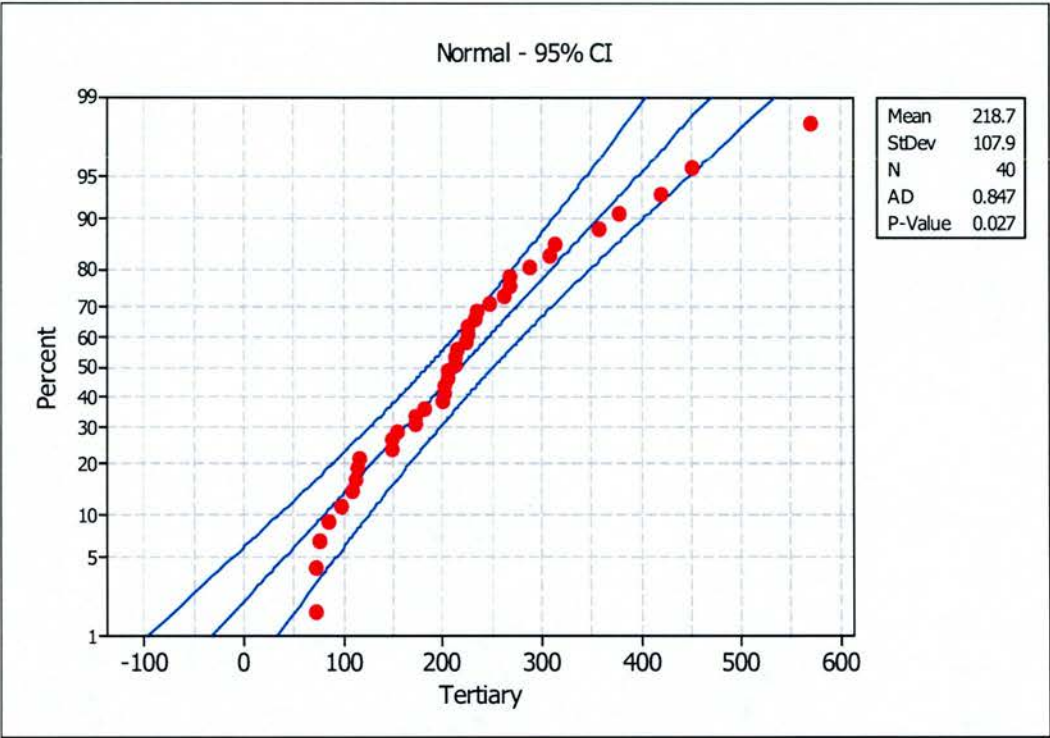
Parametric analysis specifically depends on the assumption that the data is normally distributed. The assumption of normality refers to the shape of the distribution. A normally distributed data set has values evenly spread around the central value (Tasker and Granator 2000). Hair et al (1999:70) consider this assumption to be the benchmark for statistical methods. There seems to be unanimity in the literature that violation of multivariate normality can invalidate statistical hypothesis testing (see for instance Shore 1998; Thorpe & Burt 2000). Reinartz et al (2002) have noted that correct interpretation of statistical results depends on the validity of the assumption

that the data used for the analysis are drawn from a parent population that is normally distributed and that the joint distribution of the groups used is multivariate normal.

A distribution may be in violation of the assumption of normality for a number of reasons. In the data exploration above, I referred to some data sets either with values below the median line closely clustered together and values above the median being more dispersed, or vice versa. I mentioned the likelihood of there being a measure of imbalance in the distribution. When this imbalance is serious the distribution is skewed either to the left or to the right, depending on which part of the median the values are closely clustered. Extreme values (outliers), indicated by asterisks on the box plots, can cause the distribution to be skewed in a multiplicative way (Limpert and Stahel 1998) by pulling the tails of the distribution either to the left (negative skew) or to the right (positive skew). There is always the possibility of skewed distribution when the median value does not coincide with the mean score, when there occurs a tilt in the cluster of values.

In spite of the observed likelihood of skewness in the data, it is not yet definitively decided that any of the data sets is in violation of the normality assumption. There are a number of formal procedures in the literature used to test whether the distribution fits the data (see McMahon 2001). Specific statistical tests include Shapiro-Wilks test and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Each calculates the level of significance for differences from a normal distribution (Hair et al 1999). For the present tests I used Probability plots, which uses the Anderson-Darling statistic and gives a *p*-value to show whether the deviation is significant. Figure 10 presents the results of Probability plot of tertiary processes. The statistical package being used in the analyses, *Minitab*, calculates the cumulative distribution function (cdf) and associated confidence intervals, based on parameters from the data. Parameter estimates are displayed in an output table along with an Anderson Darling (AD) goodness of fit statistic and an associated *p*-value and the number of observations. The AD statistic should be small and the *p*-value should be above the 0.05 *alpha* level for the distribution to be a normal one. *Minitab* also displays approximately 95% confidence intervals

Figure 5.9: Probability of plot of tertiary processes



(curved blue lines) for the fitted distribution. If the distribution fits the data the plotted points will roughly form a straight line. Points falling outside the confidence intervals indicate lack of fit. Researchers like Rowe (2004) have noted the robustness of parametric tests to minor deviations from normality. In the graph above however, the AD statistic of 0.847 is rather high and the p-value of 0.027 is also below the alpha level and therefore indicates significant deviation. In addition, the highest and lowest points in the graph fall outside the confidence interval. These points are considered to be the tails of the distribution. The lower one falls to the right of the confidence band indicating that there are fewer data in the left tail than one would expect based on the fitted distribution. The other point falling out of the confidence band at the upper half indicates that there are more data in the right tail than one would expect.

The data for tertiary scores therefore is positively skewed, meaning there are fewer observations in the left tail, and more observations in the right tail, than one would expect. The tertiary scores are therefore in violation of normality assumptions.

Table 5.3 presents the normality test statistics for the dependent variables in the analysis.

Table 5.3: Probability plots statistics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>A-D Statistic</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Monitoring	44.5	28.70	0.882	0.022*
Primary	72.25	43.70	0.626	0.096
Secondary	81.83	32.61	0.993	0.011*
Tertiary	218.7	107.9	0.847	0.027*
Misreading	5.075	7.777	6.203	<0.005*
Hypotheses	50.35	35.08	0.601	0.111
Claims	119.1	64.94	1.552	<0.005*
Explanations	28	31.61	2.853	<0.005*
Other	21.33	16.67	0.691	0.066

The values with the asterisks show significant deviations at the 0.05 *alpha* level. Six of the nine variables used in the analysis are in significant violation of normality assumptions.

5.2.2.2. Equality of variances

Parametric methods, assume that although different samples may come from populations with different means, they have the same variance. This is the assumption of equality/homogeneity of variance. In ANOVA and MANOVA the focus is on the equality of variances across groups formed by the non-metric independent variables. The purpose is to ensure that the variances used in the explanation and prediction is distributed across the range of values, thereby allowing for a “fair test” of the relationship across all the values of the non-metric variables (Hair et al 1999). If unequal variances reach significant levels they are likely to cause the predictions of statistical tests to be better at some levels of the independent variable than at others. Violating this assumption makes hypothesis testing either too conservative or too sensitive (Hair et al 1999:75). There are graphical tests for equality of variance and they are used especially in regression analysis. In tests for distinctions between groups, which is the present focus, the Levene’s test is commonly used to assess whether the variances of a single metric variable are equal

across the groups. *Minitab* calculates and displays a test statistic and *p-value* for

Table 5.4: Results of tests for equality of variances

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Bartlett's</i>		<i>Levene's</i>	
	Test Statistic	P-value	Test Statistic	P-value
Monitoring	4.90	0.1790	0.32	0.813
Primary	5.08	0.166	1.09	0.367
Secondary	9.53	0.023*	1.58	0.211
Tertiary	23.52	0.000*	2.48	0.077
Misreadings	56.46	0.000*	4.69	0.007*
Hypotheses	6.43	0.094	1.41	0.257
Claims	27.54	0.000*	3.78	0.019*
Explanations	19.92	0.000*	10.04	0.000*
Other	24.55	0.000*	1.75	0.166

both Bartlett's test and Levene's test, where the null hypothesis is of equal variances versus the alternative of not all variances being equal. Bartlett's test seems to be more sensitive to violations of equality assumptions while Levene's test seems to be more robust to less serious violations. Values with asterisks are in significant violation of the assumption of equal variances at the 0.05 *alpha level*. It may be noticed that the more robust Levene's test shows fewer violations. But every variable shown by Levene's test to be in violation is also shown by Bartlett's test to be in violation of the assumption of equal variances. The tests for normality and equality of variances have shown that some of the data sets are in violation of parametric assumptions. If the data sets found to be in violation are used in the analysis they are likely to affect the validity of statistical hypotheses testing.

5.2.3. Handling violations of parametric assumptions

Shore (1998) suggests four remedies:

- (i) Transforming non normal variates into normality
- (ii) Applying quality-based procedures like Ferrel's (1958) control charts
- (iii) Assuming total ignorance about underlying non-normal distribution
- (iv) Designing distribution free procedures.

Shore's fourth remedy will involve using non-parametric tests, which have the

advantage of not assuming theoretical (normal) distributions. However, as Lewis (2004) has noted, non-parametric tests have low statistical power, are less useful and lack the flexibility needed to handle multiple dependent variables. Since Shore's third remedy seems entirely inadmissible, the possible remedy may be a choice between control charts and data transformations. I intend to adopt the latter alternative. Normalising transformations are commonly used to correct skews and pull-in outliers. Tasker and Granato (2000) have noted that transformations improve the symmetry of data by contracting the difference between the median and extreme

Table 5.5: Tests of parametric assumptions and remedies

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Normality</i>	<i>Equal variance</i>		<i>Remedy</i>	
		Bartlett's	Levene's	Transform	New P-value
Monit	#			Log-normal	0.262
Primary				None	
Secondary	#	#		Log-normal	0.504
Tertiary	#	#		Log-normal	0.155
Misreadings	#	#	#	No improvement	
Hypotheses				None	
Claims	#	#	#	Log-normal	0.59
Explanations	#	#	#	Lognormal	0.428
Other		#		None	

Variable in violation of specified assumption (under respective test)

values in the population of interest. Transformations simplify the model, stabilise variance and normalise data. There are varieties of transformation procedures used to handle different types of non- normality. Table 5.5 shows the variables, the remedies applied and the new P-values of those variables transformed. Three variables: Primary processes, Hypotheses and Other tertiary processes were not in violation of normality assumptions and so no transformations were applied to them. Most of the variables which were in violation of parametric assumptions were remedied with lognormal transformation. One variable (Misreading) however, could not be remedied under any transformation and would therefore have to be used in the analysis in its original form. The space and time given to the treatment of parametric assumptions is because of the necessity to arrive at valid conclusions about any likely

differences between the two groups and treatments in the study, and the attractiveness of parametric tests in this kind of quest. The data for the study, being count data and having a lower bound of zero, with no likelihood of negative values, is theoretically considered to be non normal (see McMahon et al 2001); but this needs practical determination to be certain. Tasker & Granato (2000) have attested to the general versatility, power and mathematical elegance of parametric methods. But such methods are designed to fit normal distribution and this requires that proper checks and fits be undertaken to obtain the best possible results.

5.2.4. Formal Inferential Analysis

The exploratory analysis of the data led to the observation of certain differences between the groups with regards to the distribution of scores at the various levels of narrative processing. Those observations led to tentative suggestions about the different ways in which the groups processed the texts and also about how the texts constrained them in different ways to make adjustments in the processing strategies. The parametric analysis is meant to involve formal testing of those observations to generate definitive conclusions about the relative effects of reader and text background on use of processing strategies.

5.2.4.1. Parametric tests of processing strategies

The two factors in this analysis are: (A) Groups and (B) Texts. Each factor has two levels. The groups in the analysis are the British and the Ghanaian students and the texts are the Scottish text and the Ghanaian text. These factors are being tested against a multiple of dependent variables, which are processing strategies used at the different levels of narrative representation. For the purpose of parsimony in both the descriptive and inferential analyses, the individual processes were aggregated into their respective levels, leaving us with Primary, Secondary, Tertiary processes, Monitoring activities and Misreadings as the dependent variables. As was the case with the explorative studies, the parametric analysis will also involve a particular focus on the sub-processes at the tertiary level.

The hypothesis being tested by the parametric analysis is that readers' proximity to the cultural background of a text will result in a more extensive engagement at higher levels of processing. This hypothesis is based on such assumptions as

- (a) Readers from similar cultural backgrounds will process texts in quite similar ways.
- (b) Readers from different cultural backgrounds will process texts in very different ways.
- (c) Texts from different cultural backgrounds will put different processing constraints on readers.

The analysis therefore is meant to test the main effects of (A): differences between the cultural background of readers, the main effects of (B): differences between the cultural background of the narrative texts and (A*B): the interaction between A and B.

Table 5.6 presents the results of the MANOVA tests for the three overall multivariate effects. The multivariate statistics indicate significant main effects at all levels of the model, i.e. Group, Text and the interaction between Group and Text. What this means is that:

- (i) The two groups in the study overall, differed significantly from each other in how they processed the narrative texts.
- (ii) The two texts overall presented significantly different reading situations for the groups in the study.
- (iii) The joint effect of the group and two treatments was significantly different; that is, the two texts respectively imposed significantly different processing constraints on the two groups.

The results are in support of the assumption that readers from similar cultural background will process texts in quite similar ways. It seems legitimate therefore to treat readers from similar cultural backgrounds, like students of the University of Edinburgh or the University of Ghana as forming interpretive communities (Fish 1980), who use quite similar range of interpretive strategies to process narrative

texts. Also, the results support the assumption that readers from different cultural backgrounds will process narrative texts differently.

Table 5.6: Manova Tests for processing strategies

$S = 1$ $m = 1.5$ $n = 15.0$

<i>Source</i>	<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Test Statistic</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>DF</i>		<i>P</i>
				<i>Num</i>	<i>Denom</i>	
Manova for Group	Wilk's	0.15184	35.749	5	32	0.000
	Lawley- Hotelling	5.58578	35.749	5	32	0.000
	Pillai's	0.84816	35.749	5	32	0.000
	Roy's	5.58578				
Manova for Text	Wilk's	0.35009	11.881	5	32	0.000
	Lawley- Hotelling	1.85642	11.881	5	32	0.000
	Pillai's	0.64991	11.881	5	32	0.000
	Roy's	1.85642				
Manova for Group* Text	Wilk's	0.53300	5.607	5	32	0.001
	Lawley- Hotelling	0.87617	5.607	5	32	0.001
	Pillai's	0.46700	5.607	5	32	0.001
	Roy's	0.87617				

The significant main effect of the texts supports the assumption that changes in the cultural background of texts lead to changes in the processing constraints that readers are put under. This last finding counters radical reader response disregard for the effect of the text in meaning construction³⁰. Attention is being drawn here to the objective determinants of the text in support of the view that significant variation in meaning construction can be ascribed to text characteristics. The textual characteristic under focus in this study is the cultural background, from which, Riffaterre (1990) recognises, can be sourced sociolects, verbal givens, which are present in the text as presuppositions. However, as the results here confirm, literary meaning is not independent of readers' pragmatic knowledge and cultural experience. Their assumptions about life and reality have to match those implicated by the determinate norms of the text. The finding here is in support of the reader response aesthetics, which conceives of literary experience as an interaction of the

³⁰ This is particularly in contradistinction to the position of Fish (e.g. 1977) that it is entirely the reading community that determines what is in the text.

text horizon and the horizon of the reader (e.g Laszlo 1988; Iser 1974; 1978; 1989). Literary meaning therefore cannot be said to reside either with the text or with the reader alone. Meaning results from the interaction between the reader and the text.

Table 5.7: Analyses of variance of dependent variables

<i>Dimensio n</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>DF</i>		<i>Seq SS</i>	<i>Adj SS</i>	<i>Adj MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
		<i>Num</i>	<i>Denom</i>					
Group	Monit	1	36	4.8404	4.8404	4.8404	10.87	0.002
	Misreading	1	36	9.7969	9.7969	9.7969	10.40	0.006
	Primary	1	36	8.9721	8.9721	8.9721	37.14	0.000
	Secondary	1	36	0.2691	0.2691	0.2691	2.65	0.113
	Tertiary	1	36	5.1536	5.1536	5.1536	79.12	0.000
Text	Monit	1	36	0.1098	0.1098	0.1098	0.25	0.622
	Misreading	1	36	0.3293	0.3293	0.3293	0.35	0.237
	Primary	1	36	2.2260	2.2260	2.2260	9.22	0.046
	Secondary	1	36	2.0218	2.0218	2.0218	19.88	0.000
	Tertiary	1	36	0.6337	0.6337	0.6337	9.73	0.004
Group*Text	Monit	1	36	0.0824	0.0824	0.0824	0.19	0.670
	Misreading	1	36	2.7882	2.7882	2.7882	2.96	0.116
	Primary	1	36	0.9617	0.9617	0.9617	3.98	0.418
	Secondary	1	36	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.58	0.838
	Tertiary	1	36	1.7347	1.7347	1.7347	26.63	0.000

MANOVA allows the analyst to calculate univariate statistics to examine the individual responses, i.e. the use of the individual processing strategies. Table 5.7 presents univariate tests of the different levels of processing. This enables us to find out which of dependent variables contributed to the significant main effects in the overall tests. Note that, the univariate tests did not reach significant effects for all levels of processing for the two factors and the interaction between them. The results, however, confirm most of the observations made during the data exploration. The results demonstrate that groups differed significantly in how they used monitoring activities, primary processes and tertiary processes, and in the occurrence of misreadings. They however did not differ in the use of secondary processes. Also, the two texts constrained the two groups to use primary, secondary and tertiary processes in different ways. The differences in the use of monitoring activities and the occurrence of misreadings for the two texts did not reach significant levels. The joint effect, i.e. the interaction between the group and text, demonstrates that the two texts afforded the groups different levels of opportunity to use tertiary processes, i.e.

the groups used tertiary processes differently from each other, and differently between the texts. The differences in this way for the other processes did not reach significant levels. The univariate results indicate that the significant main interaction effects affirmed in the multivariate test occurred because of the decisive significant interactive effects of tertiary processes.

To establish which group or text obtained higher mean scores for the different processing activities, I applied Bonferroni Simultaneous Tests; a procedure for the comparison of means in General Linear Model (GLM), to the dependent variables.

Table 5.8: Bonferroni Simultaneous Test: All Pairwise Comparisons

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Response Variable</i>	<i>Difference of Means</i>	<i>SE of Difference</i>	<i>T-Value</i>	<i>Adjusted P-Value</i>
Group1 subtracted from Group2	Monitoring	-0.6957	0.2110	-3.297	0.0022
	Primary	-0.9472	0.1554	-6.094	0.000
	Secondary	0.1640	0.1009	1.627	0.1125
	Tertiary	-0.7179	0.8071	-8.895	0.0000
	Misreading	0.6957	0.2110	3.297	0.0022
Text1 subtracted from Text2	Monitoring	0.1048	0.2110	0.4967	0.6224
	Primary	-21.40	1037	-2.064	0.0463
	Secondary	4496	0.1009	4.459	0.0001
	Tertiary	0.2517	0.08071	3.119	0.0036
	Misreading	-2650	2.203	-1.203	0.2368

All the comparisons are pairwise. Group1 mean scores are subtracted from Group 2 means to obtain statistical values for the groups, and Text 1 means are subtracted from Text 2 means to obtain the values for the texts. A negative group value indicates that Group 1 had a higher value for the particular processing strategy than Group 2, and a positive value indicates the reverse. Also negative values indicate higher Text 1 means while positive values indicate higher Text 2 means. Table 5.8 presents these pairwise comparisons. There are negative group values for monitoring processes, primary processes and tertiary processes and positive values for secondary processes and misreadings. The differences for monitoring, primary, tertiary activities and misreadings reached significant levels, while differences in secondary processes did not reach significant levels. These results confirm that Group 1 readers overall obtained higher mean scores in monitoring activities, primary activities and tertiary activities while Group 2 had significantly higher mean score for misreadings.

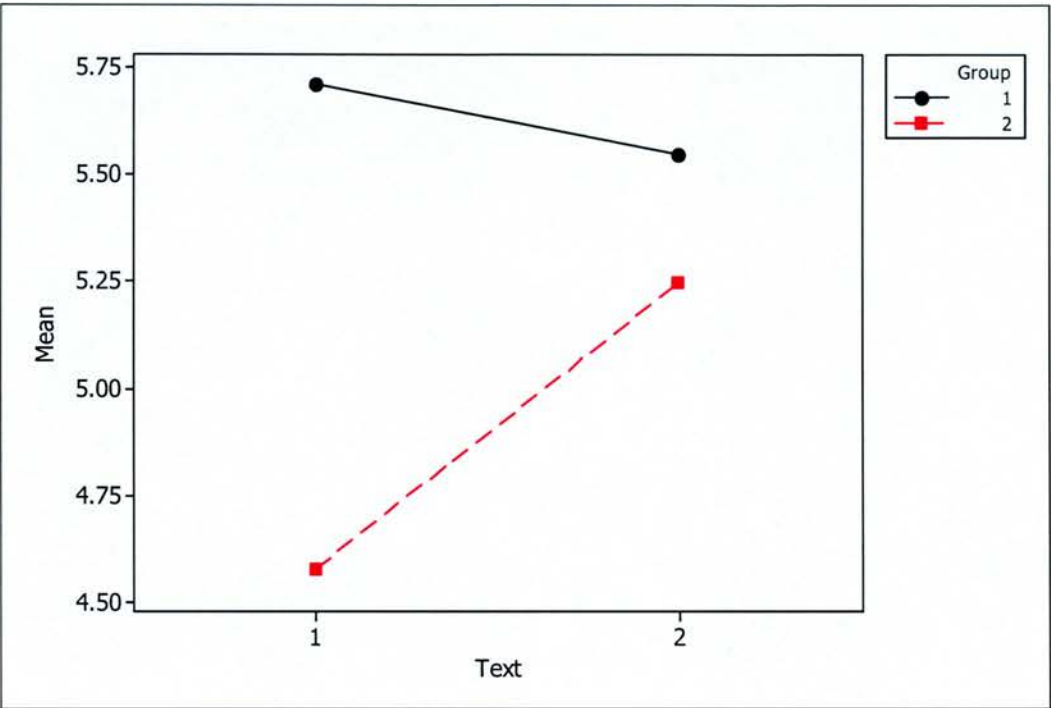
It may be noted that the Bonferroni tests indicate that the significantly higher tertiary, primary and monitoring scores by Group 1 and the significantly higher misreadings by Group 2 are the sources of the overall group main effects in the multivariate tests.

Focusing now on Texts, it can be seen that Text 2 elicited overall higher mean scores for monitoring processes, secondary processes and tertiary processes. Text 1 on the other hand required a higher mean for primary processes and extracted a higher mean score for misreadings from the readers. The differences in monitoring activities and misreadings between the texts did not reach 0.05 *alpha* significant level. The significant differences between the two texts had to do with primary, secondary and tertiary processes. Note the significant negative value for primary processes. This indicates that overall, Text 1 required readers to be more significantly engaged at the primary level of processing, i.e. re-reading the text, focusing on parts of it, not really involved in constructing any conceptual representation for it, than they were required to do for Text 2. It seems therefore that Text 1 rather than Text 2 presented greater reading challenges for the readers. It may be recalled that Group 1 made a significantly higher use of primary processes than Group 2. This does not necessarily mean that Group 1 found the texts to be more difficult; it may very well be the case that they were exhibiting greater consciousness of the challenges the texts, especially Text 1 posed, while the other group more often thinking they had a grasp of the frame needed to explicate the text, actually ran into misreadings.

Even though group differences for secondary processes did not reach significant levels, the differences of use of that level of processing for the texts reached very significant levels. This explanation may be reinforced by the observation made at the stage of data exploration that there was a somewhat increased use of secondary level processing by Group 2 and a significantly increased use by Group 1. Even though the two groups may not have differed in the frequency by which they used secondary processes, it seems they may have adopted that level of processes for different purposes. While for Group 2, who did not make any significant change between Texts 1 and 2, it might be said they felt a paraphrase or a summary was a sufficient response to parts of the text, the change for Group 1 suggests that because

of unfamiliarity with cultural material embedded in Text 2, they felt a greater need for an intermediate level of processing as a basis for further processing than they thought they needed for Text 1.

Figure 5:10: Interaction Plot (data means) for Tertiary processes



The difference in the use of tertiary processes for the two texts also reached significant levels. It was observed during the data observation that while the use of tertiary processes went down for Group 1; the use of that level of processing went up for Group 2. The positive difference, shown on Table 5.8, may be accounted for as the effect of the phenomenal rise in the use of tertiary processes by Group 2 when they came to read Text 2. This result underlines the importance of cultural proximity of text to the use of higher-level processes. Since Trivedi (1978) and Johnson (1981), researchers in the field of cultural influences on text processing have attested to the greater use of cultural (extratextual) inferences by readers who share a common cultural background with the text. This position however, is not the same as the hypothesis that readers who share the cultural background of the text use more tertiary processes (extratextual inferences) than those who do not share the cultural

background of the text. Significant effects from the present tests have shown Group 1 readers using more tertiary level processes for both texts in the study than Group 2 readers. In this study therefore, the hypothesis that that readers' proximity to the cultural background of a text will result in a more extensive engagement at higher levels of processing than others who are distant from the cultural background of the text, is not upheld. In spite of the increased use by Group 2 of tertiary processes with Text 2, their group mean score still remained significantly behind that of Group 1.

Figure 5.10 is a graphic representation of the interaction between group and text on the use of tertiary level processes. Note the relative directions and magnitudes of the lines representing the groups. It is clear that while Group 1 follows a falling orientation from Text 1 to Text 2, Group 2 follows a rising orientation from Text 1 to Text 2. This indicates that while Group 1 was constrained to take a reduction on the use of tertiary level processes at the change from Text 1 to Text 2, Group 2 found it possible to increase their use of tertiary level processes when they moved from Text 1 to Text 2. Note however that the two lines do not actually intersect and that Group 1 still remains at a higher magnitude than the Group 2 with Text 2. This means that in spite of the changed strength in the use of tertiary level processes for Group 2, Group 1 still obtained a higher mean score than they did. This finding indicates that readers' proximity to the cultural background of a text may not necessarily lead to a greater degree of higher level processing than others who are distant from that cultural background. There seems to be something else in addition to proximity to the cultural background of the text and the consequent access to the sociolect, from which the text encodes its presuppositions, which enables readers to engage texts at higher levels of processing. An analysis of the use of tertiary level sub-processes may point to an answer.

5.2.4.2. Parametric tests of tertiary processes

As Table 9 shows there were significant main effects for the use of tertiary processing strategies at all levels of the model. These results confirm that

- (i) The two groups differed significantly in their overall use of tertiary processes.
- (ii) The two texts significantly differed in their respective elicitation of the use of tertiary level processes from the readers.
- (iii) Readers from the two groups were constrained in different ways to use tertiary level processes in different ways while reading the two texts.

Table 5.9: Multivariate tests for overall use of tertiary level processing strategies

$S = 1$ $m = 1.5$ $n = 15.5$

<i>Source</i>	<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Test Statistic</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Num</i>	<i>DF Denom</i>	<i>P</i>
Manova for Group	Wilk's	0.132234	54.135	4	33	0.000
	Lawley-Hotelling	6.56187	54.135	4	33	0.000
	Pillai's	0.86776	54.135	4	33	0.000
	Roy's	6.56187				
Manova for Text	Wilk's	0.38341	13.268	4	33	0.004
	Lawley-Hotelling	1.60819	13.268	4	33	0.004
	Pillai's	0.61659	13.268	4	33	0.004
	Roy's	1.60819				
Manova for Group* Text	Wilk's	0.22081	29.112	4	33	0.000
	Lawley-Hotelling	3.52871	29.112	4	33	0.000
	Pillai's	0.77819	29.112	4	33	0.000
	Roy's	3.52871				

Table 5.10 presents the univariate analysis of variance for the individual tertiary sub-processes. As the table demonstrates, the groups used every one of those sub-processes in significantly different ways. With the exception of Claims (where the *p-value* did not reach significant levels), readers were constrained to use all tertiary processes differently with the two texts. The interaction did not record significant differences for Claims and Hypotheses but it did for Explanations and Other tertiary processes. The results create a picture of very different groups of students, reading very different kinds of texts, which are challenging them in different ways.

Table 5.10: Analyses of Variance (Tertiary Processes)

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>DF</i>		<i>Seq SS</i>	<i>Adj SS</i>	<i>Adj MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
		<i>Num</i>	<i>Denom</i>					
Group	Hypo	1	36	23.4529	23.4529	23.4529	49.63	0.000
	Claim	1	36	7.5240	7.5240	7.5240	118.48	0.000
	Explain	1	36	5.274	5.274	5.274	5.31	0.027
	Other	1	36	16.281	16.281	16.281	60.37	0.000
Text	Hypo	1	36	0.2307	0.2307	0.2307	49.62	0.000
	Claim	1	36	0.0272	0.0272	0.0272	0.43	0.517
	Explain	1	36	11.890	11.890	11.890	11.96	0.001
	Other	1	36	7.360	7.360	7.360	27.29	0.000
Group*Text	Hypo	1	36	0.0236	0.0236	0.0236	0.05	0.825
	Claim	1	36	0.1317	0.1317	0.1317	2.07	0.159
	Explain	1	36	18.260	18.260	18.260	18.37	0.000
	Other	1	36	25.812	25.812	25.812	95.71	0.000

Table 5.11 presents the results of Bonferroni tests, which were used to determine which group and text were the sources of the significant main effects that have been identified. Group 1 means are subtracted from Group 2 means. Negative values therefore indicate higher Group 1 means and positive values indicate higher Group 2 means. Also Text 1 means are subtracted from Text 2 means. Therefore negative values show higher Text 1 means and positive values show higher Text 2 means. The table shows that Group 1 had higher mean values for Claims, Hypotheses, and Other processes, while Group 2 had a higher mean value for Explanations. All these

Table 5.11: Bonferroni Simultaneous Tests: All Pairwise Comparisons (Tertiary Processes)

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Response Variable</i>	<i>Difference of Means</i>	<i>SE of Difference</i>	<i>T-Value</i>	<i>Adjusted P-Value</i>
Group1 subtracted from Group2	Hypo	-1.531	0.2174	-7.044	0.0000
	Claim	-0.8674	0.07969	-10.86	0.0000
	Explain	0.7262	0.3153	2.304	0.0271
	Other	-1.276	0.1642	-7.770	0.0000
Text1 subtracted from Text2	Hypo	0.1519	0.2174	0.6967	0.4893
	Claim	-0.05219	0.07969	-0.6549	0.5167
	Explain	1.090	0.3153	3.459	0.0014
	Other	0.8579	0.1642	5.224	0.0000

differences reached significant levels. Shifting attention to the texts, it may be seen that Text 1 obtained a higher mean value for Claims than Text 2 did; while Text 2 obtained higher mean values for the Hypotheses, Explanations and the Other tertiary

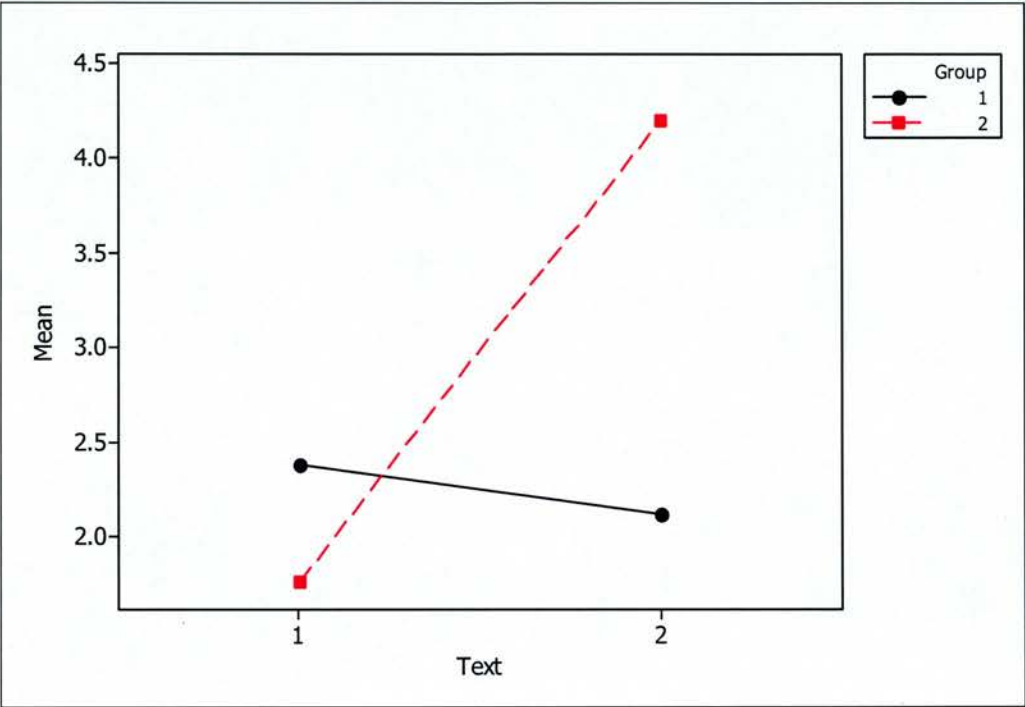
processes. It may be noted that the differences for Hypotheses and Claims did not reach significant levels, while those for Explanations and Other processes reached significant levels. Recall that Group 1 had a significantly higher mean score for Hypotheses than Group 2; but the use of hypotheses by the two groups did not differ significantly for the two texts. It seems that the use of hypotheses, claims and the other processes is a characteristic feature of the processing style of Group 1 readers, while the use of explanations is a distinctive feature of the processing style of Group 2 readers. Basically, it seems Group 1 has a greater variety of processing strategies to resort to in order to address different processing challenges, and the use of hypotheses was very helpful for them. Readers use hypotheses when the text describes experiences that are unfamiliar to them; when they have to resort to guesses and substitutions. Braun and Cupchik (2000) have observed that,

With unfamiliar experiences, readers must create the “new” experience by integrating elements of different experiences, to create a “whole” experience, akin to a patchwork quilt.

This is how skilful readers get over the barrier of alien cultural schemata. While Group 1 made prolific use of guesses and substitutions (hypotheses) to deal with the challenging and unfamiliar experiential structures that Text 2 presented them, Group 2 sought for good matches between textual structure and their extratextual knowledge schemes (explanations). Text 1 being foreign to them did not allow them to use enough of this kind of strategy. Figure 5.12 underlines the importance of Explanations for Group 2, particularly when they were reading Text 2. It is true that the plot underlines the greater use of Explanations by readers who are closer to the cultural background of the text. The beliefs and cultural assumptions easily match on the implicit structure of the text. But reference to the disordinal nature of the interaction, does not fully explain the relative importance of Explanations for Group 2 readers. It seems there was so much dependence on Explanations by the group that when they were unable to match their own schemas closely on to the text schemas, they suffered quite some degree of processing paralysis. It seems therefore that Group 1 readers have greater access to a wider range of processing skills than Group 2 did and this might partly explain their more extensive use of higher-level processes even when they were reading the culturally distant text. It is clear therefore that the

reader's access to the text's background presuppositions, its implicit discourses and cultural intertexts does not guarantee more extensive engagement at the higher levels of processing; readers need a good battery of different processing skills to be able

Figure 5.12: Interaction plot (data means) for Explanations



to harness all the knowledge structures and belief systems they can access in order to engage the text at higher levels of interaction. This conclusion however does not in anyway seek to dispute the consideration that subjects from similar cultural backgrounds form quite homogeneous interpretive communities with demonstrable similar patterns of response in terms of comprehension, liking and appreciation judgments (Dorfman 1996). The significant group effects in the multivariate tests support this view. However, the subsequent univariate tests for the respective dependent variables and the analysis of the use of tertiary processes support Laszlo (1999:108) when he notes that

Variation in interpretation at this level may result from two sources: (a) the distribution of social knowledge and (b) the distribution of literary meta-knowledge among the readers. Both sources of variance are connected to social factors, because social

knowledge and literary meta-knowledge are not distributed evenly across social and cultural groups.

Therefore a cross-cultural study of literary processing cannot be limited to accessing socio-culturally indexed information but must also account for how readers mobilise cognitive resources and skills not only to access communally shared knowledge but also to create new knowledge. As this analysis has shown, it is possible for readers from every community to use processing strategies of every kind. But the processes of socialisation within particular cultures, which expose readers to structures of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, etc, also equip some readers from certain cultural backgrounds with a greater variety and more efficient processing skills than readers from other cultural backgrounds. This demonstrates the social variation in reality sets, i.e. cognitive orientation to information, which Scollon and Scollon (1981) talk about. The merit of the quantitative analysis is that it has allowed us to measure the degree to which individuals and groups use certain processing strategies, track the changes in the responses to texts from different backgrounds and also find out the extent to which they differ from each other.

5.3. Qualitative Analyses

In the study of the role of readers' presuppositions in the processing of literary texts, quantitative measurements and analyses can assess "mean tendencies and the most occurring effects" (Andringa 1990:232). These measures have led to the determination of similarities and differences between the groups. It is however not sufficient to account only for the frequency by which readers use particular underlying processes; there is the need to track how readers establish contacts with the text world, the kinds of information they have to source in order to clarify the textual situation, and what they do with the text world they have thus constructed. While not entirely abandoning the interest in processing differences, the qualitative analyses will largely focus on how readers mobilise various knowledge structures to construct a representation for the text and the ways in which they use such representations as inputs in their explorations of human nature, life and social reality.

5.3.1. Establishing contact with the text world

The basic task of comprehension is for the reader to establish contact with the text world. They have to ascertain the coordinates of time and space, develop profiles for the characters who operate within that world and account for their activities. The interpretation of narrative texts, like the pragmatics of communication in general requires that readers provide identifications for unarticulated constituents (Recanati 2002) in order to determine the structure of the text. In Iserian (1978) terms, they have to establish the textual repertoire of norms. This section deals with how readers fill in gaps in textual information, how they deal with processing challenges, and how they put excess inferential material into constructive use.

5.3.1.1. Filling-in textual gaps

As is characteristic of every narrative text, the two texts used in the study require the filling-in of gaps left by missing surface structure elements. This process may be distinguished from bridging inferences which are automatic on-line processes of saturation (Recanati 2001). Filling-in gaps of information are strategic intentional processes in which readers consciously draw upon their knowledge of the world to compensate for short falls in textual information. Braun and Cupchik (2000) point out that filling-in gaps imply that readers can orient toward the objective text or focus on their personal, imaginative response to it. “Dedacus”, for example, opens with a focus on the small people found on the pavements, at the bus stops, people who are gradually forgotten by the wider world. These people are said to wake up every morning lost in their beds. Most readers invariably attempt to establish what is meant by the smallness of these people, and what kind of people they might be, and also why they are forgotten by the wider world.

E.g. 1: Helen (Br): “Dedacus”

These are small people/ Could mean nymphs or elfins or erm little kind of like the hobbit images./ But then it could mean it, could mean, small as unimportant, small/. They have simple lives/. On the whole, on the average, on the pavements/, That they could be the

average person you find walking on the streets/ *the people here are small.*/ The people here are small/ Small minded? Or small physically?/ *Small in the body*/ Okay. Then elfin kind of short/ *We are speaking of a time here when small things were considered unimportant and the figures that fill our bus stops were withered by lack of belief.*/ Comes up with images of old people who are withered by age and hunched up at the bus stops./ That is very dull and gray images and figures, not very much personality, I think.

It is clear here that uncovering the identity of the small people is urgent for this reader. The size of the people, mentioned repeatedly in the text, becomes salient for her and therefore becomes the initial focus of her processing activity. In her search for correspondences, she sources knowledge schemas from folklore (nymphs or elfins) and film (hobbits). The focal attention given to the size of the people leads her to the presupposition that they may be from the world of unreality. However the adjective “small” becomes salient in another way. It stands in contrast with big, important people who live glamorous lives. Smallness then has to do with one’s status in life. From experience she knows that small people are associated with simple lives; that is her presupposition: small people lead simple lives. At the mention of bus stops, the focus has narrowed from the generality of lower classes, to a particular segment of the weak in society, “old people who are withered by age and hunched at the bus stops”. What the reader is doing here is very important; she is trying to establish contacts with the world of the text and she does so by establishing correspondences between this fictional world and the world of her experience. This is a manifestation of the Iserian idea of establishing a match between textual norms with the reader’s norms of cultural knowledge and personal experience.

Other examples of gaps requiring filling-in with “Dedacus” include why the woman (Jean) turns from the street and walks into a cemetery at the west of the city; why this woman goes to pray at the cemetery, and what exactly she does with a man in car outside the cemetery. Readers track her actions, attribute motives to her and attempt to locate her social and economic background in the process of explaining why she goes to the cemetery alone at night and why she does what she does with the man in the car. The reader in the following extract is trying to fill-in the gaps of information left by the text.

E.g. 2: Karin (Br): “Dedacus”

He sighs and throws the cigarette out of the window. Fine then give me your hand. Jean helps unfasten the trousers and he rolls the seat back./ All right. / It means she is actually a prostitute. / And he is being forceful, not minding where she has just been./ She has just come out of the cemetery. / That seems quite an odd place to have this kind of meeting. / And she is getting down to it. / She is just got into the car and straight away she is unfastening the trousers. / It's like she is done it a million times before./ At least you could tell me you want to. Would I be here if I didn't? Oh Jean. / That is really strange. It's like they know each other. / Maybe it is like they are going out with each other. / And because she actually wants to be with him in a kind of sexual way. / If she was a prostitute she cannot enjoy it. / That is what I thought.

Note that Jean's action of unfastening the trousers becomes the salient feature in the text. The reader places her behaviour within the context of her coming out alone from the cemetery, and finds her behaviour with the man in the car completely at odds with her image of ordinary people who might be in such a situation. The reader takes as diagnostic features the strangeness of the meeting, the woman's brusque behaviour, her apparent lack of passion or reflection, the enormity of the action she is about to perform, and then associates her with people of a particular profession. Her assessments of those features arise from her presuppositions about normative human behaviour. By the end of the segment however, the reader is no longer sure that this is a prostitution arrangement. It strikes her as salient that the woman is not unwilling to be with the man and that he calls her by name. The reader feels compelled to revise her assessment of the nature of the meeting and for that matter, who the woman might be and the kind of relationship she might be having with the man. Note the reader's use of the past tense in “That is what I thought”. She has not given up the prostitution assessment entirely, but she feels constrained by certain mismatches between this meeting and her presuppositions about the prostitution meetings to give up this assessment. Conflicting schemas pull her to different interpretations; she is left unsure.

5.3.1.2. Dealing with processing challenges

The uncertainty that readers feel does not arise only when they cannot determine which knowledge schema among a competing cohort they may have to apply to textual features, but it arises even more urgently when readers feel they do not have a

hand on any schema that can match the textual schema. Sometimes they are obliged to use guesses or substitutions, or even transform the textual material which they find unfamiliar or abstract to something familiar or concrete. Sometimes they have it difficult achieving a credible match, especially when they are dealing with a text from a cultural background other than their own. The following examples are from Monica's, (Br) and Atsu's (Gh) reading of the Ghanaian text. The context is the discovery by the father of school girl, Mansa that she had been made pregnant by Ato, the son of the story's main character, Auntie Mansa. It is said Mansa's father who had great ambitions for his daughter nearly killed her upon this discovery. Compare Monica's and Atsu's response to the textual information that Mansa's father never let anyone sleep: Monica may have been held on either by the earlier detail that Mansa's father had great ambitions for her, or by links she may have been making with a much earlier textual information that some of the farmers in the village overwork their labourers. It is not really clear by the schema the reader evokes, what Mansa's father would be pushing her to be doing

E.g. 4a: Monica (Br): "Something..."

The phrase, Mansa's father never let anyone sleep./ He is always... he never gave her any rest. / He is always pushing her I suppose. / The general expression, he never let anyone sleep/ If he is a farmer, they know what he is like; they know that he is very demanding.

E.g. 4b: Atsu (Gh): "Something..."

Mansa's father never let anyone sleep./ Always he is annoyed he keeps on shouting, quarrelling with whatever person has done this ruinous thing against him. / And he never let people, give people their peace of mind.

Monica may have been assuming that as a farmer, who is generally very demanding, he would expect Mansa to be working very hard at school as well. It is clear she is not really familiar with the typical behaviour of Ghanaian fathers whose daughters are made pregnant out of wedlock. For Atsu, who is culturally proximal to the text, violent behaviour on the part of the father is what stands out; it is the typical and pervasive behaviour in that cultural environment and that is what becomes salient for

him. Atsu seems to be using the exact words which fathers who find themselves in the situation Mansa's father gets into may have used: "whatever person has done this ruinous thing against him".

But cultural distance or lack of matching knowledge schema does not necessarily always lead to lack of grasp of textual particulars. When they are being efficient, readers adopt different strategies to deal with processing challenges. The textual context of the following example is the intimation by one of the narrators in "Something to talk about in the way to the funeral" to the other narrator that a lawyer or a doctor was the one behind Auntie Araba's problems. Karin is considering what that professional may have done to get Auntie Araba in trouble.

E.g. 5 Karin (Br): "Something..."

I don't know how lawyers may be a problem in a woman's life./ Maybe doctors. Maybe refuse to treat them or disregard their plea. / Like, maybe she knew this thing was wrong. / And maybe they didn't look after her. / They didn't give her medicines or something and when that happened. / Maybe lawyers would have to go in but they would not./ The lawyers are responsible for her having a poor life style. / Maybe they just lost her income. / Maybe she was mistreated by her family. She was never looked after. / That is when lawyers should come into it / but maybe there was no supporter in this case. / And maybe they will actually defend men. / Maybe this is a system where lawyers are a bit corrupt actually.

The reader's presuppositions about the normative ways in which such professionals treat their clients allow her to compensate for the lack of knowledge, which she admits to, by exploring different ways in which such people may have caused problems for the woman. The reader here has indeed turned what should be a drawback into an advantage. She is mobilising her presuppositions about normative relationships between those professionals and their clients into alternative sources of information to deal with lack of knowledge and creeping uncertainty. She therefore creates a network of schemas, which reflect her extensive familiarity with ways in which lawyers and doctors can put ordinary people who go to them into trouble. Note also that the reader's exploration of these alternative sources of information enable her to begin an approximation of a stance towards the textual information. She suggests that the lawyers may not be supporting the woman but may be

defending the men instead and that the lawyers may be a bit corrupt. She is speculating on two issues, namely: gender discrimination and corruption, known generally to be part of societal malaise, and putting them forward as impinging on the private life of Auntie Araba, for the ill. But we will look at this kind of generalisation and thematic abstraction in detail later.

Sometimes readers do not really make sure that the knowledge schemes they are using to interpret the text match the text exactly or not. It just happens that they use knowledge schemes which transform textual structures which may be obscure or abstract to something familiar or concrete.

E.g. 6. Martin (Br): "Something..."

If she was a young woman at this time when they are selling their beauty in the towns she would have made something for herself. / I am not sure whether they take this as meaning that women are selling themselves, prostitution, / Or that they are selling themselves in the sense that they are marketing themselves as available for men. / But they are; yeah it is said of derogatory clubs in cities. / Now they are meat markets where supposedly very desperate men and women go. / Though not in a monetary way, are selling themselves. / They are selling themselves for the attraction of the opposite sex.

Martin begins by admitting lack of knowledge, but then he goes on to suggest this might be prostitution. He is not quite sure and so proceeds to draw on text situation closer to the sphere of his own cultural experience. The issue of people selling themselves becomes salient because of the reader's familiarity with what goes on in what he calls "derogatory clubs" in his own community. What the reader talks about has to do with both men and women selling themselves in the sense of advertising themselves as available for a sexual kind of relationship. It is not the same thing as prostitution, but for this reader the distinction is irrelevant. What he does amounts to a kind of transformation of textual material. He is not sure he is familiar with what is being presented in the text, so he constructs a parallel schema, which he puts forward as a likely match to what is going on. He has transformed something that is puzzling and quite obscure to something familiar and plausible.

5.3.1.3. Handling elaborate inferential information

When readers are in sufficient empathy with the text situation they tend to luxuriate in the situation it presents by making inferential elaborations, which make detailed presentation of the particulars of the text world. In the following extract the reader is responding to the textual information that the man who made Auntie Araba pregnant when she was a teenager and sent her back, without any support, to her people in the village, was visiting her and her family to claim the child, who was now a teenager himself and about to finish middle school.

E.g. 7: Atsu (Gh): “Something...”

So this big man from the city came one day with his friends or relatives to meet Auntie Araba and her relatives. It was Sunday afternoon./ That was a very nice day because he knows everybody would be in the house/ and that was the Sabbath day and Auntie and her family would not go anywhere. / And maybe the man from abroad might have informed them that they were coming on that Sunday./ In fact I could see how that Sunday afternoon is going to be because they are all happy. / Even Auntie Araba's family and Auntie Araba herself, they are all happy/ and they would be looking forward to receiving those visitors. / And that case is going to be settled amicably among them. / And those people, they are rich, and they are staying abroad, outside. / They would dress in big kente cloths, sorry, the man would be dressed in big political suits, with styles, and the other ladies would also dress up nicely. / Yes they would come nicely; that afternoon would be nice. / People, would eat. Gluttons are there. They would eat. They would continue eating./ in two big cars ./ They came in a big car./ It is going to be wow. It is going to be just joyous, very, very big joy in the house that day. / And the two families are going to meet. / They are going to receive them. / Well that day they would cook for them. / They may even, because they enjoy the visit, they would kill, that is what I am saying, whenever they have goats, they would like to kill the goat. / You see they would like to kill the goat and prepare a meal and make a small party over there.

The mention of city people coming to the village on a Sunday afternoon hooks the text on to a network of schemas in the mind of the reader. He proceeds by exploring the reason for the choice of Sunday for the visit, how the date may have been arranged, the likely disposition of Auntie Araba and her relatives towards the coming visit, how the visitors may be received, what their appearance at the coming may be like, the preparations that may be made to receive them and how their coming may be celebrated. The reader assumes people in Auntie Araba's community are Christians, who have Sunday as their Sabbath day, and he evokes the typical Sunday schema in his society: everybody in the house, no one going anywhere. Somehow

the reader transforms these people from the city to people from abroad and that raises their dignity and standing in the eyes of the villagers. It is for this reason that villagers would be looking forward to their coming. The reader is operating with the presupposition that villagers have a lot of respect for people from the city, from abroad. Also he assumes that these town people are wealthy and would come to the village splendidly dressed. In addition, Atsu takes the enthusiasm and the hospitality of the villagers for granted and also that they have the wherewithal to make good their generosity. But he knows also that these are not really wealthy people, it is not always that they have goats to “kill” for the benefit of their guests.

The reader speaks like an insider of the world being presented in the text. He brings to bear on his response his personal and cultural experience. He finds sufficient similarity between textual features and what he knows and he assumes that his own experiences match the textual situation quite well, or that it throws much light on the textual situation. He then appropriates the textual situation unto his own experience and luxuriates in the textual world.

Readers use inferential activities meant to fill-in gaps and to establish connections between surface structure elements, context and background knowledge. These activities are important for them to be able to establish links with the textual world. But as Collins et al (1980) have noted, readers do not use these inferences only to fill-in textual information gaps, they tend to synthesise text-based and model based inferences to construct *a priori* models that organise and guide their reasoning about the text. This is what moves them from Iser’s (1978) first code to his second code of narrative representations. The next section looks at how readers in the present study used textual representations as material to talk about life and understanding of human nature in general.

5.3.2. Relating the textual world to the real world of experience

Readers tend to form initial incomplete models of the text, constructed of schemas

triggered by salient textual features, to specify the coordinates of time and space within the textual world, describe the characters who operate within that world and account for the activities they are involved in, their beliefs, ideas and motivations which impel those activities. But when Zeitz (1994) says that the process of literary analysis is primarily the search for deeper levels, that the move across levels of interpretation lies at the very heart of the interpretive process, he intends to argue that readers need to use the text model as input for more complex and abstract levels examination of textual representation of life and reality in general. This section looks at how readers go beyond textual representations.

5.3.2.1. Constructing analogies between textual elements

The more efficient readers recognise the semiotic qualities of specific textual descriptions and this leads them to generate inferences that go beyond the limits of the text. Knowledge schemas mobilised by readers tend to support the creation of analogies, which are driven by connections of similarity at the level of structure, function or content to provide a generative mechanism for further elaboration and abstraction (Graves 2000). In the following extract, Karin responds to the narrator's presentation of the beauty of Auntie Araba's singing and the changes it underwent with time. The depth of the interpretation Karin makes here hinges on her recognition of the analogical link between firstly, the changes in the woman's voice and changes in her life, and then between the sweetness of her voice and goodness of her nature.

E.g. 8: Karin (Br): "Something..."

It was still a woman's voice. But it was deeper and this time like good honey was rough and heavy, its sweetness within itself./ So they are quite obsessed with the kind of way this woman sang the song. / It is quite a vivid image of the way this woman is. / This song was a kind of representing the way this woman was, / representing the changes in her life./ The song change paralleled the way she was really. / Her voice got deeper like good honey. / You kind of associate older people with inherent goodness really. / And people who become respected in their community. / And it is when she was sweet berry on the tongue. It was when she was young and feminine. / And she is kind of mature, her voice got deeper. / She had more substance to it because it went like good honey rather than sweet berry. / It became more rough and heavy. / And became more; there

was more to it really. / The sweetness became more innate, as it was sweetness within itself, as opposed to this kind of sweet berry on the tongue.

She proceeds with these analogies assuming that older people are normally associated with inherent goodness; femininity has a stronger link with youth than it has with age, and that honey has more substance than sweet berry. Note the process of abstraction that is taking place here. The specific description of the woman's singing enables the reader to come to an understanding of her nature and life. Additionally, the reader is able to move beyond the specific situation of the portrayal of an individual fictional character to make statements about human nature in general and about social reality.

Readers sometimes draw analogies between two or more specific situations to generate a more general category of the schema, which encompasses them both. The general category serves to preserve commonalities between the analogues, which thereby become instances of the abstract category; transformations of the abstract schema into a set of concepts appropriate to a specific domain (see Holyoak 1982). The following extract shows the reader responding to the textual information that while Jean walks home after the encounter with the man in the car she is reminded that she had in her bag Brian's photo, taken when they first met. It is said she knows the picture off by heart. She then passes by the police station and notices the clock there and wishes buses were running. Note that the reader attempts to link buses no longer running, the clock jerking at the police station, the walk she has to undertake and her looking again at Brian's photo with the idea of time and transience. The four concrete situations are really analogues of the abstract category, the passage of time. The individual analogues function as symbols for the reader and their interconnection creates a complex system that seems to express a generalisation for the overall significance of textual structure. The reader's generalisation is supported by her presuppositions about the normative scheduling of bus times, the possibility of being left behind by the flow of time and the loss associated with the flow of time. Time is associated with change, decay and nostalgia for things that have slipped away with the flow of time. This is how she explains Jean's resentment with time ticking away and her obsessive return to look again at Brian's old photo.

E.g. 9: Karin (Br): "Dedacus"

The clock at the police station window is jerking towards half past ten. She wishes there were still buses running./She does not want to think, really because that makes her feel sad. / And it is quite late now and it is dark and sleety, and she cannot feel comfortable/ I mean the significance of the clock of the police station jerking. / I don't know; the image of time. / Buses. When you think of buses you think of time coming along. / Time will always be part of it. / This whole idea of transience, I suppose. / She resents time ticking away. / And she is very conscious of it really. / This whole idea of her looking at the photo. / She is thinking of the past again.

Sometimes the analogical abstractions which readers make go beyond internal connections to link the text to other texts or to extratextual abstract concepts and situations. In the following, the reader has just processed the text segment which presents Brian as moaning over his callused hands; he was so tired when he came home that he could not eat the food his wife had left for him. He was just eager not to miss lying in bed with his wife on a Sunday morning, it being the only time they have together. But the fact remains that he is not alone in this, and his situation may not be the worst.

E.g. 10: Karin (Br): "Dedacus"

Low voices murmur calling after dreams, while in other places small people run among machinery their faces shut./ Calling after dreams./ Is it that people are sleeping and dreaming at the same time?/ And other people are running around. Small people are running around./ It is a kind of eugenics thing. Maybe these people who have been bred to be small do that. They can run about the place./ It is like a kind of a brave new world thing, where people have been bred this way. / More like a kind of an Orwellian kind of idea, where people are like locked there, and others who have their freedom. / They are just accounted for all the time. / They are just extensions of machinery. Their faces are shut./ That is an interesting image you know what I mean. / They are not quite awake. They are not quite alive./ They are got expressions that they haven't time for personality./ They just keep to their jobs and keep their faces shut. / The only freedom they have got is in their dreams./ Other people are really working on a Sunday. Everyone is at work all the time

Note the attempt to link the text to the brave new world, eugenics and to the Orwellian world. The reader is standing the text in relation to other bodies of discourse, other projects and thoughts, whose occurrence in the present discourse serves to prolong them and transform them to something close and familiar and at the same time admit current discourse into common memory. This is in effect an

instantiation of the idea of intertextuality, which leads us to consider prior texts as contributions to a code, which make possible the various effects of signification. The reader hereby is participating in the discursive practices of the culture; the signifying practices of a culture that assumes that a brave new world, eugenics and an Orwellian world are despicable denigrations of human life. The weight and enormity of that reference to small people become obvious. When it comes to correspondence with Orwell it is difficult to be certain whom her object of comparison is: Winston or the proles or a combination of both; for it is the proles, supposedly free, who work endlessly among the machines without consciousness; and it is Winston, conscious of what is going on, who is not free. The small people seem to be a combination of the worst parts of the two. On making these links the reader becomes free to mobilise the normal rhetorical forms that have been used to describe such situations: "They are not quite awake, they are not quite alive". This is dialogism in the Bakhtinian (1981) sense; anterior voices echoing in current voice to create polyphony of voices. Their having to work on a Sunday is really at odds with her presuppositions about what people should be doing on a Sunday. If people are working on a Sunday then they should be working all the time. This is an affront against her assumptions about rest, and ultimately the dignity that should be accorded the human person.

5.3.2.2. Making thematic abstractions

The processes of abstraction and analogical reasoning are parts of the effort to arrive at what they assume to be the author's intention or the point of the narrative. Zeitz (1994) has indicated the more efficient readers recognise that the actions and beliefs of the characters cannot be taken at face value or belief. Readers have to make abstractions in order to link the story with the world of ideas, for which the narrative is a symbolic representation. Zwaan et al (2001) have noted that readers are required to move beyond the textual situation to analogous situations outside story proper in order to create themes. According to them in order to make thematic inferences readers must gradually move beyond the specifics of a narrative, its temporal and spatial framework, until analogical processes can be applied and a theme can be

drawn. Zwaan et al distinguish between first order information and higher order information, which for them is a distinction between information about protagonists, objects, temporal and spatial relations and information about causal and motivational relations. Referring to this same distinction, Kurtz and Schober (2001) argue that readers must excise first order information and construct thematic information by seeking higher order analogies to notions about culture, society and human nature.

In the next example the reader (of “Something to talk about on the way to the funeral”) takes a global view of the happenings in the story and makes statements about what might be the whole point of the story. It is clear that the reader goes beyond the limits the story to the general field of information relating to the cultural and social history of Africa. His exploration leads him away from the specific situation of two women gossiping about the wayward behaviour of educated big men, to embrace the whole idea of change from traditional to modern lifestyle. He is not merely investigating what is being told in the story, but more importantly why the story is being told, the purpose of the narrative, the point being made. He comes to the conclusion that the people are weary of the new changes. In coming to this realisation the reader makes a number of assumptions expressing his presuppositions

E.g.11: Martin (Br): “Something...”

Adjoa was saying that these our educated big men have never been to much good. / I think she is implying that Adjoa has some experience with these educated big men herself. / So we are seeing here something of changes in the times now. / Young girls are selling themselves. / And now these educated men who weren't before so. / You see a period of some decade, some education has been brought to this part of Africa, / which are much of the things going on in different countries in Africa / with the support of more developed countries just around the corner as well. / And there has been a move from rural farming based lifestyle to these so-called educated professions: lawyer and doctor and so forth. / So obviously some people are weary of the new things that are brought in.

about the cultural and social history of Africa: that education is relatively a new phenomenon in Africa, that education in Africa is supported by developed countries, that prevailing life style was rural and based on farming, that the educated professions (lawyer, doctor, etc) are part of the new lifestyle that has come with education, that this new life style has been brought into Africa from elsewhere (not

home grown). It is these presuppositions that make the woman's (Adjoa's) criticism of the educated big men salient and bring into focus the weariness of the population.

The reader's concentration on the purpose for the narrative corresponds with what Vipond and Hunt (1984) refer to as point-driven reading, which they distinguish from information and story-driven readings. Vipond and Hunt examine the pragmatics of literary reading and propose that an adequate account of literary reading must attend both to its social-pragmatic and to its psychological-cognitive dimensions. They argue (with Polanyi 1979) that the kinds of things that narrators ultimately get at are socially and culturally shared values and beliefs. Vipond and Hunt explain that a point involves what Labov has called *evaluation*: "the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its *raison d'être*: why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at" (Labov 1972 quoted in Vipond and Hunt 1984).

5.3.2.3. Taking a stance towards the text

Readers do not always merely present what they assume to be the author's intention or the point of the narrative; they sometimes take a stance towards the text; they adopt a perspective from which they interpret textual materials like character, character activity, beliefs and motivations, images and symbols, temporal and spatial features. The stance which the reader takes may be indicated by the way they allocate attention to textual objects, the pattern of features that create salience for them and the experiential set they draw upon to make meaning of the text.

E.g. 12a: Karin (Br): "Something..."

That girl is our own Auntie Araba and that child is Ato the big scholar we hear of./ That child. I don't know which child. I don't know./ It was a kind of shame showing how men get the upper hand. / They get education, they get respected and heard of. / To hear of somebody is pretty significant. / He must have a lot of respect, valued position in society.

In E.g.12a, the reader seems to adopt a stance which allows her to see a greater part of things in the text in terms of gender discrimination and oppression and alienation

of women. The reader had just processed the text which tells about Auntie Araba having been sent to live with a lady relative in the city, as a teenager, and the husband of the lady relative making her pregnant and the couple sending the girl back to the village in order to save their marriage. The fact that the reader, at the moment, is not able to determine which child is being spoken about does not deter her from seeing the whole picture as one those instances in which the female is victimised and disadvantaged while the male is always privileged. She proceeds with the presupposition that men always get the upper hand; in this story the male person being spoken about gets education, respect, is heard of and has valued position in society. This reader assumes that what differences there are in life can simply be explained in terms of gender. The assumption of male privilege and female alienation becomes the stance which this reader adopts throughout, as a framework by which she interprets the story. Compare this to another reader's response to the same passage:

E.g. 12b: Jacqueline (Gh): "Something..."

Now we hear it looks like when Auntie Araba returned to the village or to the town she had a child, Ato who became a very big person./ You see Ato has become a very big person. / That is how it works. / Sometimes take the people you think you can do everything to and go scot free. / And then these very people come out and become big people. / Those that you left to the weather, to everything; they actually grow up and become something great. / And you think that nothing good will come out of them, but then they grow up they become big people. / I think it is a reward from God to console them for what they have been through. / Yes I think so because it happens normally./ If you look at the Ghanaian set up there are so many stories of these things / People going to stay with others being impregnated, being sent away under harsh conditions, / having these kids and these kids turn out great.

What triggers Jacqueline's response is not that Ato, who becomes a big scholar, is a male, but that he is a human being, who was neglected and disowned by his father even before he was born. It has to do with social injustice in general. Is it a coincidence that the British reader sees this passage as an instance of male privilege over the female, while the Ghanaian sees it as an example of human suffering and divine reward for suffering? But we cannot push this point too far. What is important now is that we have two different readers absorbing the same text into their respective subjectivities and generating rather different, but equally legitimate

readings of the text. These readers may be seen as two different instantiations of Iser's (1974) "Implied Reader." In the case of Jacqueline, just as it was for Karin, the passage offers her the opportunity to take a swipe at the oppressor and take a stand with the disadvantaged. She supports her stance with her assumptions about the normative treatment meted out to such girls who go to live with other families and the aftermath. She operates with the presupposition that good shall prevail over evil; that may be surmised.

Readers use the stance they adopt toward the text as a scaffold around which they structure textual interpretations and when they maintain interpretive coherence these stances become the platform for the expression of ideological commitments. Note the following extract, also from Karin:

E.g. 13: Karin (Br): "Something..."

So she is saying that girls are selling their beauty in the towns as if that is far away completely different society to this one. / But then she is saying the men here are just as bad. / And she realises she shouldn't be making this kind of inferences because that can land her in trouble. / Maybe just result in violence. / Maybe quite high in frequency of domestic violence often associated with them. / I think of anthropological studies. I am thinking of domestic violence. / I am thinking of societies where women are universally subordinate and they used to do what is expected of them. / And maybe the men have got problems maybe with drink and things. / They have their own societies; women are separated. / Women are told to respect men; they are the ones who are educated. / Women are not allowed to be educated. / They are not endowed with much respect. / They are to cook and look after the home and the kids and that is their duties in life. / They are the kind of people, the sex that is close to nature really. / That is we reproduce and cook. / Whereas men are the ones who are allowed to go the towns. / They are allowed to work in the towns like this man who works for the government. / I mean there is no way in which a woman could do that. / The women are more concerned with probably funerals, which are rites of passage. / I suppose the women are associated with traditional values /and the men are moving on and they are getting up to the top and things.

The adoption of a stance involves the reader highlighting certain textual features while entirely ignoring others. This reader focuses her attention on the fact that the narrator realises that she could get into trouble if she goes on making those inferences she is making about the big educated men. The reader does not in the least consider any possibility that the narrator may have realised there may be no basis for her to be making those inferences and that may be the reason why she may

get into trouble. Karin assumes that the narrator may get into trouble merely because she is a female who is saying things males would not like to hear from a woman. The assumed likelihood of trouble for a woman who merely raises her voice to criticise males, hooks on to body of information the reader has acquired in anthropological studies about domestic violence and the subjugation of women under men. She operates with the presupposition that women are segregated from men, are restricted to domestic affairs while men are in pursuit of greater things. Note how the reader moves the discussion well beyond the limits of the text to engage those traditional societies in general. Taking a stance from which to interpret texts involves linking textual material with abstract concepts and situations. Note also that this abstraction links together several textual features, like the male child getting more respect, the women going to the funeral and the men going to town to look for jobs, and imputes the same general significances upon them.

It will be difficult to quote this reader's more extensive passages which depict the gender stance she takes in her interpretation of the Ghanaian story. It should suffice to quote one brief comment she makes about the fact that the leading protagonist, Auntie Araba, married Egya Nyaako, a good farmer who treated his labourers well:

E.g. 14: Karin (Br): "Something..."

He is a farmer and he treated people fairly. / Well fairly to the point that you can treat women in a society./ I mean he was hiring people during the cocoa harvest./ Maybe he needed extra help and he is doing people a favour by hiring them. / It is not like forced labour or anything like that. / He treated them okay, not under extra pressure./ So they got properly paid,/ no kind of abuse by this man. / Auntie is lucky to have got this man.

Karin assumes that abuse of women is pervasive in this society, and that this man, who treated women fairly should be a rare exception. Even then she does not fully endorse this particular man. His fairness to women can only be relative, "fairly to the point that you can treat women in a society". All the same the reader distinguishes for us some of the things which other men may routinely do to women, which this man may not do: forced labour, bad treatment, extra pressure, no proper pay, all kinds of abuse. These are her presuppositions about treatment of women in a

society in which the female is discriminated against on account of her gender and subjugated by the male. She seems to find sufficient information in the story to allow her to define the fictional society in these terms.

Taking a stance to the text, as this reader does, cannot be exempt from ideological presuppositions and bias. It is in this same way that readers can make postcolonial, feminist, Marxist, or deconstructionist reading of any text:

- Take a particular stance that communicates your ideology,
- Give selective attention to textual material,
- Ignore textual information that does not fit your stance,
- Link specific textual situations to the abstract concepts of the ideology.

There is little wonder, therefore, that Iser opposes this kind of reading to the chagrin of Eagleton and other Marxist ideologues. Eagleton charges that “Iser’s reception theory, in fact, is based on a liberal humanist ideology: a belief that in reading we should be flexible and open-minded, prepared to put our beliefs into question and allow them to be transformed” (Eagleton (1983:79) quoted in Thomas (2000:26)). This, indeed, is what the reader in last example is unable to do.

It must be said however that not every reader takes a stand or expresses ideology in the same explicit way. In fact ideology need not be any of the coherent master narratives that dominate modern western thought, like any of the examples given above. Any expression of approval or blame, empathy or indifference can define orientation and commitment to a particular stance. With textual materials serving as the trigger, readers mobilise their own presuppositions and use them as support for the stances they adopt. Whenever the occurrence of such expressions become systematic and gets linked to extratextual abstractions and generalities then the reader is giving an ideological treatment to the text. This is how readers locate the concrete text within the world of ideas.

5.3.2.4. Reasoning with the text

To support the stances they have taken readers engage in all sorts of argumentation

and reasoning. Some readers recognise abstract level relations within works and between works and integrate information to form complex arguments. Readers argue about character behaviour, beliefs and motivations. As the arguments get more complex, readers take on the worldview being presented and what they assume to be the author's intentions.

E.g. 15: Jacqueline (Gh): "Something..."

So Auntie Araba said in that case there was no problem. Mansa was a good girl. The child and mother should go on living with her until Ato finished his education then they could marry properly. / That is a dream. She is dreaming wild. / Because, I don't think if Ato finishes his education he will come and marry a school dropout. / That is what they call a school drop out with a born one. / Please she is dreaming wild. / I think she should forget about it. / She has good plans for Mansa but then it is not going to work. / For Ato going through college, he is going to meet other girls who will come out with him / and he is going to marry a graduate or someone he came out with from school. / He wouldn't want. . .

Note that the reader proceeds with her argument by first looking at the Mansa's weakened position as a school drop out who already has a child, and then looking at the more attractive alternatives Ato may have at his disposal which may weaken further the likelihood of him coming down to marry Mansa. The reader selects her arguments from the normative behaviour of young men in this society, and the experiential schemas she mobilises make it possible for her to evaluate Auntie Araba's plans as mere wild dreams. Note that the reader's familiarity with the text situation enables her to use forward reasoning to carry her point across; i.e. move from the fact that Mansa was a school drop out and that she already had a child and that Ato being in college is bound to meet other girls there, to the prediction that Ato will marry one of the college girls rather than Mansa.

Sometimes when the reader's argumentation becomes more multi-dimensional they get involved in processing circularity: judging, modifying, confirming and then entering the material into the process as new inputs. This is Jacqueline's response to the text information that the girl, Araba had been made pregnant and returned to her parents in the village by stealth.

E.g. 16. Jacqueline: "Something..."

So see this is what happens in the Ghanaian set up. Things like this happen and then they cover it. / You wouldn't even hear it any way. They wouldn't.../. They will just cover it because it is said they sent her home quietly, very quietly. / They just cover the whole thing up / She got pregnant and because this erm, relative didn't want her marriage getting broken or like getting disrupted, they sent her home/ Packed her up, kept quiet over the whole thing and sent her back to where she came from. / Now they have destroyed Araba's life. / Maybe if she had lived in the village or wherever she was, things would have been different. / But then here she was, gone to stay with relatives. / They have destroyed her life, and to make their marriage work they sent her away. /. This is an irony. You can't, your husband goes after your... let's say, Araba would be like her own child. / And then when you find out, instead of finding something, a very good solution, you decide to save your marriage and you send the child away. / What kind of marriage? You find, what kind of marriage are you going to have? / Are going to trust the man you are married to? / You are not going to trust the man again so why do you want still being there? /I don't know why Africans, I don't know. Marriage seems to be our whole, the pillar, the whole pillar for the nation. /. And now if you are not married it seems to be a curse or something like that.

Many things become salient for her: that Araba was made pregnant when she was quite young and outside wedlock; that she was returned by stealth to her parents; that the city couple wanted to save their marriage. The attempt at a cover up is quite pervasive in the Ghanaian set up, as she says. The destruction of Araba's life follows from the fact of pregnancy outside wedlock. Jacqueline finds it ironic that the couple wanted to save their marriage even though there can be no more trust for the man. Obviously, the reader is operating with the assumptions that young Araba deserves to be treated fairly and should have been given a better settlement. Also the reader assumes that as someone who becomes pregnant while still very young, she forfeits the prospect of a good marriage in future or a better situation in life. Further, Jacqueline assumes that marriage ultimately thrives on trust. The reader here has moved beyond the specifics of textual structure to mobilise interpretive schemes that may throw light on what is happening in the text. And then she uses the composite scheme thus developed to argue against the importance of marriage in the African society. This may be seen first as a judgement on the couple's clinging to their marriage whatever the case may be. It should also be a modification of earlier prognosis that Araba's life is destroyed since her future should not necessarily depend on getting a good marriage. But it is also a confirmation of the bleak future she faces because the fact is, in Africa, marriage is such "a pillar for the nation" and if you are not married you are considered to be a curse.

5.3.2.5. The effect of cultural proximity or distance

The emphasis on the role of readers' presuppositions and the deployment of knowledge schemas support the view that proximity to the cultural background of the text gives readers a processing edge. The quantitative analysis did not lead to a denial of this fact; neither has the qualitative analysis. Readers need this kind of knowledge to fill-in gaps of information and determine the particulars of the text world. But the analysis has also shown that cultural distance from the text does not necessarily lead to processing paralysis. By the use of guesses, substitutions and transformations readers draw the experiential structure of the text to their own field of knowledge. The quantitative analysis showed that readers from a distant culture might actually do better than readers closer to the textual culture, that is, if they have access to a wider range and more effective processing skills. It is necessary to find out if there can be a qualitative confirmation of this.

The qualitative analysis, in dealing with ways in which readers may enter into processing circularity, using the constructed text world as input for further processing, more definitely, than the quantitative analysis, shows that construction at the higher level is not really uniform. Determining the particulars of the fictional world is indeed a higher level processes. But when the reader on becoming familiar with this world recognises its semiotic potential and uses it to construct further significances, then additional higher levels of abstraction are imposed on the initial level of concrete textual situation. While readers may quite readily fill-in information gaps to establish the coordinates of the textual situation, it is not automatic that they would use the information so gathered to reason about human nature, life or reality in general. The point being made is that while a reader who shares the cultural background of the text may easily fill-in all information gaps and get stuck at that level, another reader, who may not necessarily be sharing the cultural background of the text may be able to use compensatory strategies to construct the text world and most probably go ahead to use textual information to explore the semiotic significance of the text into greater depth. Compare the

following extracts. Rose is a Ghanaian reader, and Karin is a British reader. They are both reading a section from the Ghanaian text, which says the husband of one of the narrators could not come with his wife to Auntie Araba's funeral.

E.g. 17a: Rose (Gh): "Something..."

And your husband? He could not come. You know government work./ So Adwoa is married and her husband works. / He is a civil servant so he couldn't take a French leave. / You must give notice several weeks ahead if you want to stay away for half of one day./ She explains why her husband couldn't come./ It is tangible.

E.g. 17b: Karin (Br): "Something..."

Maybe that is why this sister's husband didn't bother coming because the Auntie didn't seem important to him at all. / Maybe it is women who are concerned with these issues of death. / The men don't really concern themselves with funerals and things like that. / We will find out, I suppose, if there are men around/ I think the funerals are comforting to the women / when they can come together, have their own privacies, and have time to themselves. / And they are probably grateful, for that probably. / Otherwise they are trapped in their homes and stuff / and they are actually allowed to leave for occasions like this. / And yeah it is time for gossip as well.

Note that some of the comments that Rose makes are more or less logically entailed to the text. Adjoa could not have had a husband if she was not married, neither could the husband be doing government work if he was not working. The inferences are indeed trivial. She seems to accept, with apparent naivety, without demur, that as a civil servant Adjoa's husband could not come because he could not take a French leave. It seems however that Rose is certain about the comments she makes and her affirmations not only determine what the textual situation should be but also underline her own presuppositions about how things like taking unannounced leaves of absence obtain for people in the civil service, i.e. working for the government. Karin on the other hand makes it clear that she is not really certain about her comments. And she proceeds with series of hypotheses. This, the analysis has shown, should not put her at any processing disadvantage. As Langer (1991) has explained, literary readers continually explore possibilities, see many sides, and go beyond their envisionments to focus on the human situation and the complex meanings embedded in it. That is what Karin does. Her uncertainties do not stop her from exploring what may have been the attitudes of the different genders towards funerals. For Karin, this is another instance of gender discrimination, the sad fate of

women and their subjugation in this society. While Rose does not give out anything we cannot learn solely from the text, Karin takes us beyond the text into an exploration of the nature of life and social reality.

It seems therefore that cultural proximity to the text only offers a good potential for higher level processing to readers by enabling them to easily fill-in gaps in textual information. But reading to ascertain textual information is what Vipond and Hunt (1984) refer to as information-driven reading, quite distinct from point-driven reading. Thematic abstractions, analogical reasoning, extensive and in-depth argumentation, and establishing intertextual connections: these are the processes which create multidimensional and multilevel textual representations which dialogue with the real world, human nature and social reality. These are skills that enable the creation of new knowledge, and individuals and groups vary in the extent to which they can access and use them. It seems therefore that readers bring both declarative and procedural knowledge to bear on the texts they read. Declarative knowledge, consisting of cultural facts, beliefs and other experiential structures, are required to fill-in gaps of information and to serve as input for higher-level abstractions. Procedural knowledge should consist of compensatory strategies and other processing skills that allow readers to engage texts at higher levels of abstraction and construction of multidimensional representations.

The qualitative analysis has underlined the importance of readers' presuppositions and background knowledge schemas in the interpretation of literary texts. Readers use their prior knowledge schemes to carry out the inferential processes which establish the particulars of the texts, i.e. Iser's (1978) repertoire of textual norms. They also use their presuppositions as inputs for thematic abstractions, analogical reasoning, establishment of internal and external correspondences and multidimensional argumentation. But the analysis has demonstrated that the availability of appropriate knowledge schemes alone is not sufficient for literary processing of texts. Readers need the processing skills that will take good advantage of the knowledge schemas to build higher-level representations.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the effects of reader and text variables on the construction of literary meaning. The quantitative analyses were meant to follow familiar research praxis to arrive at centralising tendencies, which establish similarities within groups of readers, and also aim at outcomes of possible variations and distinctions between groups of readers. The qualitative analyses sought to track the complex of processes by which readers access personal and cultural knowledge structures and match them with textual information in order to construct textual representations. The triangulation of analytic procedures helped the analysis of the readers' subjective and qualitative responses in a systematic, reliable way without discounting or reducing the individual character and complexity of the underlying processes.

Significant main effects obtained for reader and text characteristics argue strongly against formalist and structuralist neglect of reader effects in the construction of meaning, and also against the radical reader response attempts to ignore the effects of the text. The significant main effects obtained for the interaction between reader and text characteristics provide empirical support for the dialogic view that literary meaning dwells neither with the text nor with the reader, but is generated as a result of the interaction between the reader and the text. The inability of the analysis to support the hypothesis that proximity to the cultural background of the text ensures more extensive engagement at the higher levels of processing, legitimises the focus on other reader characteristics like literary metaknowledge, which allow readers to go beyond textual schemata. A match of readers' cultural presuppositions and other knowledge schemes with the implicit and explicit textual structure offers a potential for further processing, which needs the mobilisation of literary processing skills. The analyses seem not to favour research on literary interpretation which treats the reader's model of the text as the ultimate output of text interpretation, or merely accesses readers' cultural inferences or personal reminders. Analysis of literary processing could more profitably focus on how readers mobilise personal and cultural schemata to interact with textual schemata and using information thus

constructed to interrogate belief systems, reason about knowledge schemes, and analyse world views. The analysis of readers' experiential data should focus on their subjective and unique responses, their processes of developing empathy, and on how they grow in their understanding of the human condition, life and social reality.

Chapter 6: Readers and fictional worlds

6.1. Introduction

Even though the analysis of readers' comprehension processes in the last chapter paid attention to the various levels of literary processing identified in the analysis, it was made clear that merit in reading achievement lay with the use of higher level cognitive processes, in which the reader took an active, responsive attitude toward the text, agreed or disagreed with it, augmented it or applied it to other contexts (c.f. Bakhtin 1986). This study of literary cognition is in line with Linell's (2003) suggestion that to be involved in a cognitive or communicative activity is to move beyond what is already given. For this reason the analysis of the content of reader responses will shift away from the construction of the denotation of texts, i.e. "what is said", to the construction of the connotation of texts, "what is meant" (Grice 1957). It was for this reason that while units of readers' protocol data were coded for the three levels of processing, only the representational output from tertiary processes and their interview data were coded for content. The analysis in this chapter will therefore be concerned only with the schemes of knowledge, beliefs and feelings resulting from readers' use of tertiary level of processing, and from their interview data.

The analysis here, like the one on cognitive processes, will be a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative procedures. The quantitative section will begin with data description and informal exploration and then move on to more formal parametric analyses. The qualitative analysis will begin with a concentration on group differences in the construction of fictional character and situation and then end with an analysis of reader involvement with texts and how this involvement creates certain identities for them.

6.2. Quantitative analyses

The quantitative analysis uses statistical methods of comparison and contrast, focusing on central tendencies and data spread and evaluation of significant differences to determine the degree to which the two groups in the research differed in certain aspects of fictional representation. In the interest of parsimony, at certain points in the analysis some of the representational categories used in the analysis will be combined to allow more effective handling. As usual, this section will begin with informal descriptions to identify distributional patterns that may guide the formal analysis.

6.2.1. Data summary and exploration

6.2.1.1. Data size and distribution

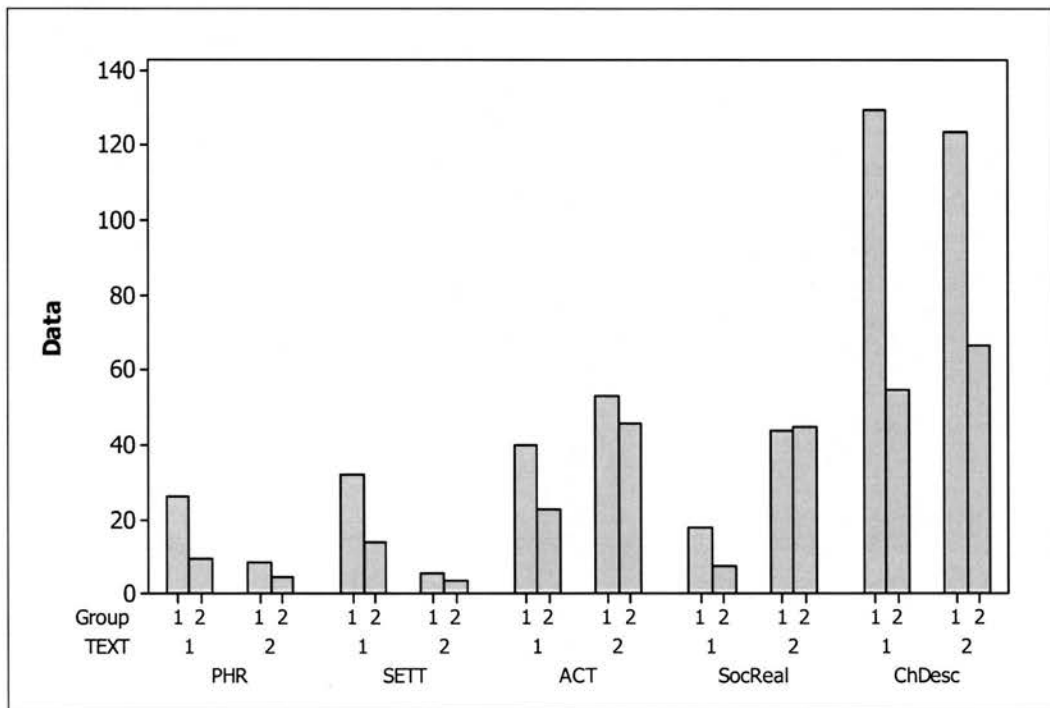
Readers' protocol and interview data were coded for five major categories of experience: character description, fictional setting, social reality and human relations, and narrative activity. But to allow greater distinctions of narrative representation, three of the categories were broken down into sub-categories, resulting in sixteen classes of experience used in the analysis. The following is the list of categories:

- (a) Character descriptions (ChDesc): (i) Physical Descriptions (PSD) (ii) Personal Background Information (PBI) (iii) Cognitive and Affective Situation (CAS) (iv) Character Attitudes and Behaviour (ACB) (v) Character Life Situation (CLS)
- (b) Social Reality (SocReal) (i) Occupations and Public Routines of Life (OPR), (ii) Class Structure and Tension (CST), (iii) Ethnic and Historical Facts (EHF), (iv) Social and Religious Performances (SRP), (v) Belief Systems (BST), Moral and Value Systems (MVS)
- (c) Setting (SETT): (i) Temporal and Spatial Setting (TSS), (ii) Human and Domestic Surroundings (HDS), (iii) Mood and Atmosphere (MDA)):
- (d) Personal Human Relations (PHR)

(e) Activity (ACT)

In the quantitative analysis, however, at certain points, the main categories (rather than the subcategories) or a combination of some subcategories will be used. Figure 6.1 is a multiple cluster bar chart, which represents mean values for the groups and the texts. Each category is represented by two pairs of bars, one pair for each text. The first pair of bars, on the extreme left of the chart, represents mean scores for Personal Human Relations (PHR) in Text 1. The second pair represents scores for the same category for Text 2. It is clear that readers in both groups obtained higher

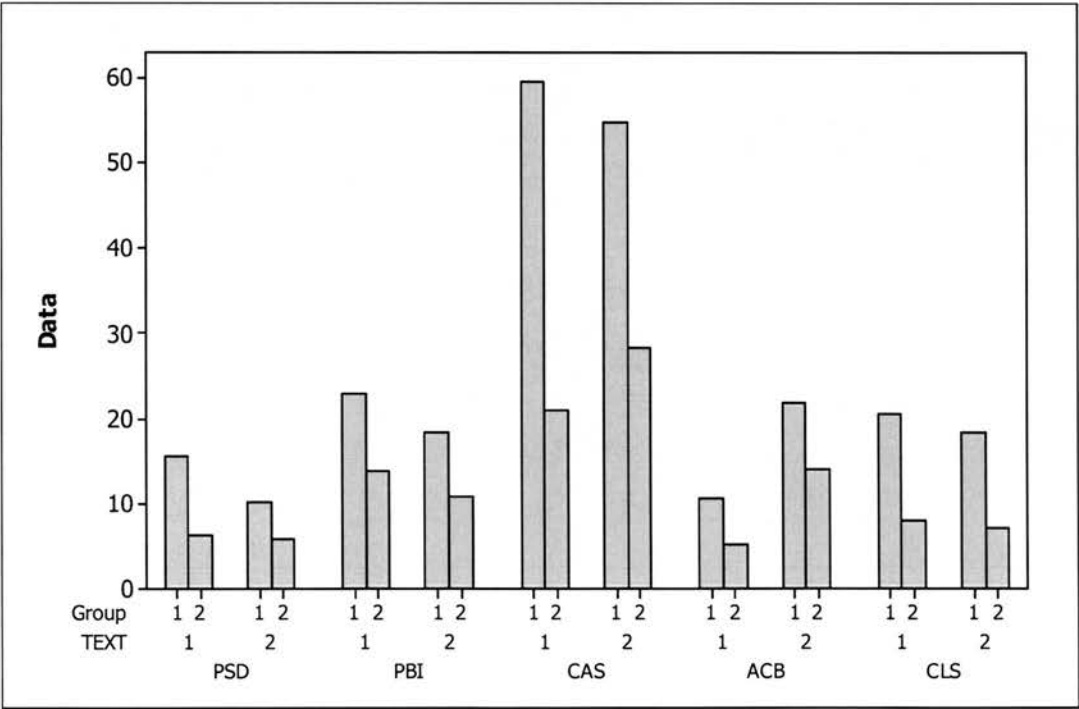
Figure 6.1: Chart of group and text mean values



scores for Character Descriptions in both texts than they did for every other category. This indicates that readers were more involved with getting to know characters than they were in getting to know what the characters were doing, the social and physical backgrounds to their lives and activities, or even how they related with each other. It may also be observed that scores for Character Description (ChDesc), Setting (SETT) and Personal Human Relations in Text 1 were higher than scores for those categories in Text 2 for both groups, except that Group 2 made a higher

representation for ChDesc in Text 2 than they did for Text 1. On the other hand, scores for SocReal and ACT in Text 2 were higher than they were in Text 1. The other clear pattern that emerges is the higher values for Group 1 for virtually every category in both texts. The only change in this pattern is the very marginal edge Group 2 had over Group 1 for Social Reality. (SocReal) with Text 2. Another pattern is that falls and rises in values resulting in the change from Text 1 to Text 2 go in the same way for either group, except for Character Descriptions, where Group 1 made a slight fall while Group 2 made a very slight gain. That is, the groups changed from one text to the other in more or less the same way. It should be noted that the differences between the two groups were greatest with character descriptions, setting and personal human relations. Group 1 clearly showed more interest or greater efficiency in constructing those aspects of fictional representation.

Figure 6.2: Chart of sub-categories of Character Descriptions



Since the category ChDesc attracted more reader attention than any other category, it seems necessary to take a look its subcategories to find out what patterns may be represented in their distributions. Figure 6.2 presents this breakdown. The most

dominant feature here is the higher values for Group 1 in every case. Another feature is that Group 1 obtained higher scores in Text 1 for every category than they did for Text 2, with the single exception of Character Attitudes and Behaviour (ACB) for which they got higher values for Text 2 than they did for Text 1. Group 2 followed the same pattern, the only difference being that they got a higher value for Cognitive and Affective Situation (CAS) in Text 2 than they did in Text 1. What this indicates is that both groups focused more on character behaviour and attitudes when reading Text 2 than they did for Text 1. Group 2 spent more time with characters' emotional and mental processes when they were reading Text 2 than when they were reading Text 1. Generally however, the two groups made more detailed representations for fictional characters in Text 1 than they did for characters in Text 2. Note also that even though Group 1 obtained higher scores than Group 2 in every category, with CAS, and CLS, Group 1 doubled the scores of Group 2 in both Texts. There is a very big gap between the two groups in their representations of characters' internal lives and situations in life.

The picture we are getting so far is that while there appears to be only a marginal difference between the groups in their construction of fictional activity, Group 1 makes more detailed constructions of narrative character, setting and personal human relations. Also, while Text 2 seems to be more involved with fictional activity, Text 1 is more involved with setting, character and personal human relations. This assessment is reflected in the following extract from the interview with Helen (Br) after she had read the Ghanaian text:

INTERVIEWER. *Did you like the story?*

HELEN. It is quite an interesting story, but I think I prefer the first one./ I think it is more, it had more images. It is more images./ This one is just, it was quite an interesting story, but it didn't come off with as many images in the mind.

INTERVIEWER *When it comes to the characters, there is lot to say about the characters... and the way they are projected... the kind of people we meet in this story.*

HELEN Yeah

INTERVIEWER *For example Auntie. She is the kind of person who will strike you as outstanding, isn't she?...The kind of woman she is...*

HELEN Yeah. She doesn't have very strong traits./ There isn't much./ They are not talking about her./ She never had any specific lines that gave her character away./ And they say she will do this; she just sounds nice and good./ But we don't see much of her personality.

When Helen talks about “images”, she seems to be referring to the physical and natural landscape which provides the setting for the story and the way reference to that landscape may have become emblematic of the fates of characters presented in the story, and how these references become iconic representations of human nature and social reality in general. Note also how she talks about what she perceives to be activity based nature of the Ghanaian narrative and its paucity of character delineation. The Ghanaian story was interesting to her, but she preferred the Scottish text, which for her had more images and therefore made deeper representations of character.

6.2.2. Inferential analysis of readers’ comprehension data

The purpose of the inferential analysis is to test the data formally for the effects of reader background and the cultural origin of text on the construction of meaning for narratives. There will be a multivariate test to determine the overall effect of the independent variate (the composite variable of group and text) on the dependent variate (the categories of meaning used in the analysis). This test will be performed together with univariate analyses of variance to test the effect of the factors on the individual variables. There will also be a post-hoc test to find out how the individual variables contributed to the overall general effects. But before running these formal tests the data were submitted to tests of normality and equality of variance to check their suitability for multivariate testing.

6.2.2.1. Tests of normality and equality of variance

To carry out the formal tests a slight change was made with the grouping of categories for the analysis. The subcategories of ChDesc (PSD, PBI, CAS, ACB and CLS) will be used in the analysis individually because of the very high scores readers made for them compared with the other categories. We therefore have nine dependent measures for the formal quantitative analyses. These variables were submitted to normality and equality tests. Table 6.2 presents test results and *p-values* for the equality and normality tests. Variables whose *p-values* for the respective tests

shown with asterisks are in violation of those assumptions indicated, at the 0.05

Table 6.2: Results for Normality and Equality tests

Variable	Normality tests		Tests for Equal Variances			
	AD Statistic	P-Value	Bartlett's tests		Levene's tests	
			Test Statistic	P-Value	Test Statistic	P-Value
PSD	1.485	<0.005*	5.29	0.004*	13.44	0.04*
PBI	0.653	0.082	0.54	0.656	1.79	0.619
CAS	1.541	<0.005*	3.71	0.020*	20.83	0.000*
ACB	0.841	0.028*	2.00	0.131	10.96	0.012*
CLS	2.294	<0.005*	3.18	0.035*	19.75	0.000*
PHR	2.115	<0.005*	1.62	0.201	9.34	0.025*
SocReal	1.749	<0.005*	28.25	0.000*	3.09	0.039*
ACT	0.274	0.646	0.92	0.443	2.26	0.51
SETT	2.270	<0.005*	8.48	0.000*	26.2	0.000*

alpha level. Only two variables, PBI and ACT did not obtain significant values of violation for either the normality or variances tests. Bartlett's tests, which are more robust to minor violations, did not find either PHR or ACB as well in violation of Equality of Variances. There is however the need to transform all the values in violation of normality conditions, and probably, PBI, which is only marginally not in significant violation of normality assumptions. Table 6.3 presents results of

Table 6.3: Results of transforms

Variable	Remedy	
	Transform	New P-Value
PSD	Lognormal	0.887
PBI	Square root	0.320
CAS	Lognormal	0.581
ACB	Lognormal	0.164
CLS	Lognormal	0.074
PHR	Lognormal	0.668
ACT	None	---
SETT	Lognormal	0.428
SocReal	Log normal	0.872

remedies applied on the data sets. As the table shows no action was taken on ACT since it was not in violation of either of the multivariate assumptions tested. PBI,

which was only marginally not in significant violation of assumptions, has actually been improved by the application of a Square Root transformation. CLS could only manage a marginal shift from the violation bracket by the use of lognormal transform. No other transformation could improve it. The remaining variables have undergone good improvement by the application of lognormal transformation. The transformed values are the data used in the formal inferential analyses.

6.2.2.2. Parametric tests and analyses

Parametric procedures in this chapter are used to test variations of the hypotheses and assumptions that were examined in the previous chapter (on processing strategies). It is necessary however to note here explicitly that the analysis in this chapter is to test the hypothesis that the degree to which readers construct representations for fictional narratives is determined by their proximity to the cultural background of the text. This hypothesis is dependent on the following assumptions:

- (a) Readers who are culturally closer to the background of the text can access a larger stock of knowledge structures which are relevant for the construction of the representation of the situation presented in the fictional text;
- (b) Subjects' constructions of texts which are closer to their cultural background will be more detailed and vivid;
- (c) Readers from culturally differentiated backgrounds will differ in the degree to which they construct representations for fictional texts;
- (d) Readers from the same cultural background will construct comparable representations for fictional texts.

The analysis is therefore, just as was the case in the last chapter to

- (a) Perform multivariate tests for the main effects of the independent variables,
 - (i) (A) differences in the cultural background of readers,
 - (ii) (B) differences in the cultural background of the narrative texts, and
 - (iii) the interaction between A and B ($A*B$), on the construction of fictional representations.

- (b) Perform univariate tests to determine which of the dependent measures contributed to any of the distinctions that may be distinguished between the groups of readers and the narrative texts.

Table 6.4 presents results for the multivariate tests. As the *p-values* demonstrate, all the four multivariate tests indicate significant main effects for the two factors of the model, the cultural background of readers (Group) and of the fictional narrative (Text) at the very strict 0.001 *alpha* level. The interaction between the factors marginally failed to reach significant main effects at the less stringent 0.05 *alpha* level. The main effects recorded for Text indicates that the changes that occurred in readers' representations of some categories of experience as a result of the change of

Table 6.4: Results of Manova tests for narrative representations

S = 1

m = 1.5

n = 15.0

Source	Criterion	Test Statistic	DF		F	P
			Num	Denom		
Manova for Group	Wilk's	0.28112	9	28	7.956	0.000
	L-H's	2.55718	9	28	7.956	0.000
	Pillai's	0.71888	9	28	7.956	0.000
	Roy's	2.55718				
Manova for Text	Wilk's	0.08151	9	28	35.058	0.000
	L-H's	11.26858	9	28	35.058	0.000
	Pillai's	0.19849	9	28	35.058	0.000
	Roy's	11.26858				
Manova for Group*Text	Wilk's	0.59779	9	28	2.093	0.065
	L-H's	0.67284	9	28	2.093	0.065
	Pillai's	0.40221	9	28	2.093	0.065
	Roy's	0.67284				

text reached significant statistical levels of difference. The lack of significant main effects for the interaction is a formal confirmation of the observation that there were similar patterns of change from one text to another; that is, generally, when one group was constrained to make a reduction in the score for a particular category, the other group also recorded a reduction in the representation of that same category. The literature is replete with claims that text understanding varies significantly from reader to reader depending on the assumptions and ideologies that they individually bring to bear on the text. Meutsch (1986) for example reported reader elaborations

which referred to personal experience of content and fictionality of the text. The problem generated by such findings is that they tend to construe research attitude towards reading as if it was a purely idiosyncratic phenomenon and ignore its socio-cultural nature. Laszlo (1988) has reminded us that the sociology of reading implicitly acknowledges the role of knowledge and value systems in literary interpretation by assuming that the relation to literature is socially conditioned. Readers' interpretation therefore can be studied in the light of socio-cultural affiliation. The significant main effects of the Group factor in the current research gives empirical support to this alternate position. The idea of a common "European type" reading culture (Halasz et al 2002; Halasz 1988), that is, the idea that western Europeans read more or less in the same way, seems to be a plausible one. There are of course reader differences, but there are also similarities, and it is such similarities that put readers into socio-cultural groups, which this study has found to be a distinguishing factor in literary interpretation.

Significant main effects for Text affirm the fact that texts differ culturally just as readers differ culturally. In cross-cultural studies of narrative comprehension, researchers have used special narratives that are supposed to be embedding particular historical and cultural epochs of a society's life. Laszlo and colleagues (for example Laszlo 1988; Laszlo et al 1989; Laszlo 1999), for instance administered narratives that dealt with recent Hungarian history to Hungarians and readers from other cultures and nationalities, to test the role of cultural and historical knowledge in the interpretation of short stories. Since the choice of stories in the present study was not guided by any such considerations the results of the analysis make the selection of texts on grounds of specific use of socio-historical material unnecessary. Neither should cross-cultural study of narrative comprehension be limited to the explication of specific cultural references, historical or mythical figures, or of marked or regional use of language. Ullan (1995) includes literary forms among the list of artistic images whose formation and interpretation involve the processes of objectification and anchoring, by which they are linked to existing categories and integrated to our socio-cognitive schemata. That is, fiction, like all art, is intrinsically socio-cultural

and does not need a special focus on some historical-cultural epoch to evoke group distinctions and identity.

It is important at this point to examine the univariate analysis of variance to determine which dependent variables led to the main effects in the multivariate tests. Table 6.5 presents results of the univariate tests. As the *p-values* show, all the

Table 6.4: Results of univariate analysis of variance

<i>Source</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>DF</i>		<i>SeqSS</i>	<i>AdjSS</i>	<i>AdjMS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
		Num	Denom					
Group	ACT	1	36	1476.2	1476.2	1476.2	9.41	0.004
	LNPSD	1	36	5.3814	5.3814	5.3814	28.49	0.000
	SqRtPBI	1	36	10.805	10.805	10.805	10.58	0.002
	LNCAS	1	36	6.4241	6.4241	6.4241	41.25	0.000
	LNACB	1	36	3.4754	3.4754	3.4754	10.62	0.002
	LNCLS	1	36	8.8907	8.8907	8.8907	20.55	0.000
	LNPHR	1	36	7.5267	7.5267	7.5267	24.84	0.000
	LNSETT	1	36	4.127	4.127	4.127	10.49	0.003
Text	LNSocReal	1	36	1.8768	1.8768	1.8768	6.48	0.015
	ACT	1	36	3222.0	3222.0	3222.0	20.53	0.000
	LNPSD	1	36	0.7037	0.7037	0.7037	3.73	0.61
	SqRtPBI	1	36	2.796	2.796	2.796	2.74	0.107
	LNCAS	1	36	0.0901	0.0901	0.0901	0.58	0.452
	LNACB	1	36	8.3340	8.3340	8.3340	25.46	0.000
	LNCLS	1	36	0.2462	0.2462	0.2462	0.57	0.456
	LNPHR	1	36	10.7798	10.7798	10.7798	35.57	0.000
Group*Text	LNSETT	1	36	31.125	31.125	31.125	78.81	0.000
	LNSocReal	1	36	18.0442	18.0442	18.0442	62.34	0.000
	ACT	1	36	225.6	225.6	225.6	1.44	0.238
	LNPSD	1	36	0.1705	0.1705	0.1705	0.90	0.348
	SqRtPBI	1	36	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.03	0.865
	LNCAS	1	36	0.4385	0.4385	0.4385	2.82	0.102
	LNACB	1	36	0.1604	0.1604	0.1604	0.49	0.488
	LNCLS	1	36	0.0933	0.0933	0.0933	0.22	0.645
	LNPHR	1	36	0.3722	0.3722	0.3722	1.23	0.275
	LNSETT	1	36	0.374	0.374	0.374	0.95	0.337
	LNSocReal	1	36	2.1171	2.1171	2.1171	7.31	0.010

variables reached significance level at the 0.05 *alpha level* for Group difference. This means every variable in the analysis was given a significantly different level of representation by the two groups in the study. Four variables (PBI, PSD, CAS, and CLS) did not reach significance level with regard to the Text factor. The remaining five variables (ACT, ACB, PHR, SETT, SocReal) obtained significant special effects. This result means that, overall; readers constructed the first list of four

categories of experience to a comparable degree of detail for both texts. There is the other point that the significant main effects registered for Text in the multivariate test depended on the significantly different constructions readers made for the remaining five variables. None of the variables, except SocReal reached significant special effects with the interaction between Group and Text. This explains the lack of main interaction effects in the multivariate tests. These results imply that whatever patterns of change that occurred with readers' scores at the shift from one text to the other was either not significantly different between the groups or between the texts.

Table 6.6: Bonferroni simultaneous tests narrative data

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Response Variable</i>	<i>Difference of Means</i>	<i>SE of Difference</i>	<i>T-Value</i>	<i>Adjusted P-Value</i>
Group1 subtracted from Group2	ACT	-12.15	3.961	-3.067	0.0041
	LNPSD	-0.7336	0.1374	-5.338	0.0000
	SqRtPBI	-0.1.039	0.3195	-3.253	0.0025
	LNCAS	-0.8015	0.1248	-0.423	0.0000
	LNACB	-0.5895	0.1809	-3.258	0.0024
	LNCLS	-9439	0.2080	-4.533	0.0001
	LNPHR	-0.8676	0.1741	-4.984	0.0000
	LNSETT	-06424	0.1987	-3.233	0.0026
	LNSocReal	-0.4332	0.1701	-2.546	0.0153
Text1 subtracted from Text2	ACT	17.95	3.961	4.531	0.0001
	LNPSD	-0.2653	0.1374	-1.930	0.0615
	SqRtPBI	-0.5287	0.31950	-1.655	0.1066
	LNCAS	0.09494	0.1248	0.7608	0.4517
	LNACB	0.9129	0.1809	5.046	0.0000
	LNCLS	-0.1569	0.2080	-0.7544	0.4555
	LNPHR	-1.038	0.1741	-5.964	0.0000
	LNSETT	-1.764	0.1987	-8.878	0.0000
	LNSocReal	1.343	0.1701	7.896	0.0000

But SocReal presented a different picture. The results indicate that representations of social reality differed significantly between the groups and between the texts. That is, the two texts offered such different opportunities to the two groups that they were compelled to construct Social Representations in significantly different ways. To determine which group or text was responsible for the significant effects, Bonferroni Simultaneous Tests were run for the variables. Table 6.6 presents the results of these tests. As indicated on the table, the statistical procedure first of all calculates the difference of means between the groups and the texts before calculating other statistics, the most important of them being the Adjusted P-Value. In the present tests, Group 1 means were subtracted from Group 2 means and a negative value

implies a higher Group 1 mean value while a positive value implies a higher Group 2 means. In the same way Text 1 means are subtracted from Text 2 means, with negative values indicating a higher Text 1 mean value and positive value implying a higher Text 2 mean value. An *alpha* level of 0.05 *p-value* was set for significant statistical effects. It may be seen from the table that all the variables for group differences have negative values. This means that Group 1 readers overall constructed significantly more detailed representations than Group 2 readers for every experiential category used in the analysis. Some of the *p-values* in these comparisons even reached significant levels at 0.0001 *alpha* levels. This means that for the categories PSD, PHR, CLS and CAS, the probability that members from the two groups could have been drawn from the same population is equal to or less than one in ten thousand. This should give us an idea of the gap between the two groups.

Even though this study affirms the critical role of reader and text background in the construction of fictional representations, the hypotheses that closer reader proximity to the cultural background necessarily leads to more detailed and vivid fictional representations is clearly undermined by the results of the parametric tests. Subsequently the assumption that readers who are closer to the cultural background of the text can access larger repertoire of background knowledge structures for the construction of fictional representations is not supported by the results obtained in this study. These results compel a rethinking of the role of cultural background in the interpretation of texts and the construction of fictional representations. When faced with a situation in which Hungarian readers could not record significantly more reminders than Danish readers when the two groups processed Hungarian short stories, Laszlo (1989; 1999) concluded that it is not the number of reminders that were functionally important but their type and content. He noted that the Hungarian reminders were more contextually rich events and particularly more personally experienced and therefore relevant experiences. The Danes seemed more distant from the story because they could relate it only to few of their own personal experiences.

Readers in the present study were not merely noting sections of texts that reminded them of certain experiences and explaining those experiences. They were using textual material and combining them with their cultural and personal knowledge to construct phenomenal fictional experiences. It seems possible however that a reinterpretation of the types and contents of variables that recorded extensive differences between the groups and those that did not record such extensive differences can lead to an understanding of the role of cultural background in the understanding of fictional texts.

The results of the tests here confirm the observation that the greater differences between the two groups have to do with experiential structures whose construction require higher degrees of generalisation and abstraction, and that Group 1 seemed to have greater access to such knowledge structures than Group 2 did. Group 2 is shown to a greater extent to be the group more likely to have settled with making schematic representations of people, objects, locations and events described in the text, that is, satisfied with merely recovering textual repertoire of norms (Iser 1978). Even though such representations have been considered as constituting the situation model of the text by discourse psychologists like Zwaan (1999a, 1999b), Zwaan et al (2000), Graesser et al (1997), the output of literary comprehension cannot be entirely complete merely by accessing the referential situation described in the text (Kintsch 1988), as the Ghanaian readers seem to be doing most of the time. It should be remembered that as constituents of intentional cultural artefacts, fictional characters, their goals, emotional states, their activities and the social and physical environments that form backgrounds to their lives are all semiotic devices, whose full value can be realised only when they are considered to be iconic, indexical and symbolic localisations.

The conception of the literary interpretation being advocated here construes not only fictional texts, but also their referential situation models as signs which represent, depict, or stand for something lying outside of themselves (c.f. Volosinov 1976:9). What we are claiming for the literary text is what Bakhtin (1986) claimed for the word and the sign, “a bottomless repository of meaning”. This is the logic of infinite

semiosis in which one interpretation turns into a sign, which then turns into a sign, which needs to be interpreted again and again. Oksanen (2001) explains that interpreting cultural products consists of an endless chain of significations. He argues that if we define one sign it would be necessary to refer to another sign that would again refer to a third one, etc. This is what allows meaning to expand continually. This study has shown that the British subjects were more efficient in constructing one signification upon another and in treating the fictional text as symbolic representation that needs interpretation again and again.

Turning now to differences between the texts, it will be seen that there are negative values for five variables (PSD, PBI, CLS, and SETT), which means there were higher values with Text 1 for those variables than with Text 2. Text 2 had higher mean values for the other four variables in the analysis (ACT, CAS, ACB and SocReal). Three of the variables with positive values (ACT, ACB and SocReal) obtained significant special effects, while two of the variables with negative values (PHR and SETT) reached significant levels. These results indicate that while personal human relations and fictional setting are diagnostic experiential categories for Text 1, narrative activity, character attitudes and behaviour and social reality are diagnostic categories for Text 2.

Looking at the features that distinguish the two texts it seems reasonable to suggest that there is a measure of cultural correspondence between the texts and the readers. Note that even though the Ghanaian readers were significantly behind the British readers in the construction of every one of the variables used in the multivariate analysis, they were further behind with categories that had to do with the representation of fictional characters, their interior lives, personal relations and situations of life, than they were with categories expressing fictional action, character behaviour and social reality. It is these same categories that are found to be diagnostic of the Ghanaian text. Recall Helen's preference for the Scottish text because it had more images than the Ghanaian text. The point is that some of the Ghanaian subjects found the Scottish text quite unreadable. The following extract is

from George, a Ghanaian reader, when he got to the final stages of his reading of the Scottish text.

I got to where Jean took out the photograph of Brian/ and then there was; she mentioned that nothing has survived except the image./ Was it the smile or the haircut?/ Here he was in overalls, which together with some other things indicate that he is an engineer or a mechanic of some sort./ Okay from there Jean went back to the cemetery and I think was walking back home./ And it came back to Brian again./ He was trying to stay awake and here talking./ Talking about that night being special./ Again what makes this night special?/ This story might be, in a way, this writer just puts down sentences./ Is she writing a poem or some story./ Some literary devices, personification./ Because machines doing some things you would expect humans to do.

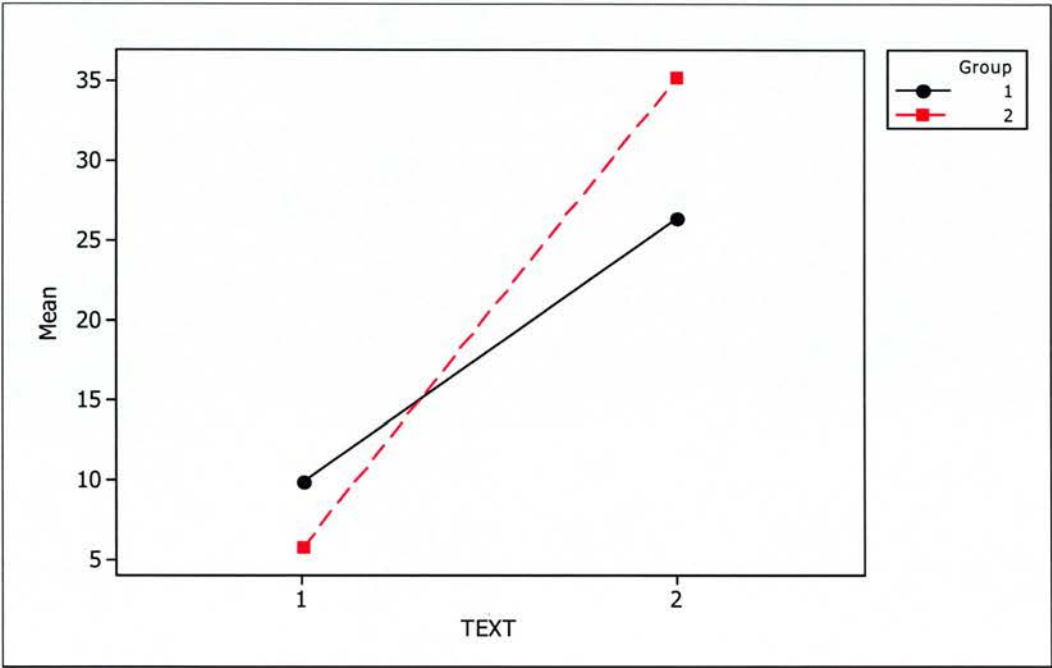
This quotation captures well the reader's search for a focal point from which to interpret the narrative and it seems to underline the reading style of most of the Ghanaian subjects and the kind of difficulties they got themselves into when they were processing the Scottish text. The problem has to do with establishing narrative coherence. For this reader, and for many others from his group, coherence has to do precisely with structured sequence of events, which he tries desperately to assemble textual material to construct without success. In the Scottish text coherence is largely established through the exposure of interior landscape of characters and their life condition, and linking these with the external environment of desolate burial ground, wet and stormy weather and deserted night streets. Note Andy's (a British reader) reading of a section of the text and the comments he makes about the structuring of the narrative: an insight, which eluded a greater number of Ghanaian readers:

06.39. *She opens the door and steps out; sleet is falling*
06.40. Again the coldness of the weather
06.41. Using pathetic fallacy
06.42. It is the coldness of the weather reflecting the mood, coldness

Again, as the analysis has shown the Ghanaian readers were looking for hints of social life and public routines which they were quite familiar with. The graph below shows how what they looked for and could not find in the Scottish they found to be quite abundant in the Ghanaian text. Figure 6.3 is an interaction plot for occupations and public routines of life (OPR), one of the subcategories of SocReal. The fact that the data means for the two groups both follow rising orientations underline the strong

interactional effect of text on the construction of that particular category of experience, and the intersection of the respective group plots also depict the effect of reader background. It seems reasonable to suggest that Ghanaian readers were happier accessing textual material relating to familiar routines of public life, which they found to be significantly lower in the Scottish text. The multivariate analysis has shown that they are happy to construct categories that describe social reality in general; and that is meant to include local historic facts, ethnic myths, folk narratives and ritual performances. All these tend to have structured and sequential order of

Figure 6.3: Interaction Plot (data means) for OPR



events, simplified characters and projected social value. Even though the British readers had a greater range of constructive interest than the Ghanaians, they seemed happier dealing with individual lives and personal relationships and combining them with spatial and temporal settings to generate significances. The cultures, which produced the texts as artefacts, just as well produced the people as readers.

It may be noted that the choice of texts and subjects were both random, and that no one can really pretend to be making claims about their typicality in relation to the cultural backgrounds they are taken to represent. However, in spite of the variations

among individual readers the Ghanaian text generally met most of the expectations of the Ghanaian readers for fictional narratives, while the Scottish text had most of the features that the British readers looked for in a narrative text.

6.3. Qualitative Analysis

6.3.1. Recategorising readers' comprehension data

The processes of categorisation abstracts the textual unit from its immediate context, since it is supposed to encode discrete expressions of experience and serve as the basis and justification of any subsequent interpretations that may be made (Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Ratner 2001). The qualitative analysis however, involves the extraction of interpretive themes from the data and this requires the recontextualisation of the data to link each unit to its original context. This should result in the regrouping of data, which will then be used to develop profiles for individual subjects, and searched for convergences and divergences between the groups with the view of isolating themes which express subjects' phenomenal experiences. In this study I will use adaptations of Giorgi's (1975; 1985, 1997) phenomenological procedures for interpreting psychological qualities to extract interpretive themes from the data.

6.3.1.1. Reclassifying categories of experience

The classifications used in the analysis so far are general enough to be applied to the analysis of readers' interpretations of a wide range of fictional texts. However, to maintain a grasp of the details of readers' qualitative experience of particular texts it is necessary to adopt more specific classifications which relate the texts used in the study. The fictional characters of interest to the analysis need to be identified so that, for instance, units of data encoding readers' experience of those characters can be grouped under their respective categories. Also units expressing relations between characters will need to be sorted to reflect the nature of interactions between

particular groups of individuals whose relationship is the subject of discussion. For the Ghanaian text in this study, realities of social life will have to be identified in terms of whether they refer to the city or to the village. References to social class and tensions and conflicts in the text will also need to be isolated into those occurring between males and females, big and small people and those between the city and the village. Table 6.7 presents the sub-classifications that were made for the respective texts. It may be seen on the table that no re-classifications were made for Social Realities in Text 1. This means the original categories will be used in the qualitative analysis for that text. Also no re-classifications were done for Setting in Text 2 since values for this category with Text 2 were just negligible and therefore will not be used in the analysis. How these re-classifications worked is that, for example, all

Table 6.7: Re-classification of fictional comprehension data

<i>Text</i>	<i>Experiential Dimensions</i>				
	<i>Character</i>	<i>Setting</i>	<i>Personal relations</i>	<i>Social descriptions</i>	<i>Social conflicts</i>
Text 1	(i) Jean (ii) Brian (iii) The man in the car (the boss)	(i) The graveyard (ii) The streets and Jean's neighbourhood (iii) Jean and Brian's flat	(i) Jean and Brian (ii) Jean and the boss		
Text 2	Auntie Araba Mansa Ato		(i) Auntie Araba and Ato (ii) Auntie Araba and Mansa	(i) Social realities in the village (ii) Social realities in the city	(i) Conflicts between males and females (iii) Conflicts between big and small people (iii) Conflicts between the city and the village

character physical descriptions (PSD), personal background information (PBI), character affective and cognitive states (CAS) character attitude and behaviour (ACB) and character life situation (CLS) relating to the Text 1 character Jean, were extracted, using Microsoft Access, and put together under the heading of that character. In the same way, units were reallocated to Brian and the man who was with Jean in the car, sometimes referred to as “the boss”. Constructions for Text 2

characters were reassembled in the same way. For Text 2, all segments that had been classified under any of the subcategories of SocReal were regrouped together according to their incidence at the village or in the city. Therefore references to funerals, cocoa farms, market days and the Wesley chapel school were grouped under the village category. This scheme provided the framework to account for the specific representations of interest that readers made for the different texts.

6.3.1.2. Developing structural descriptions and constituent profiles

Each reader's data was re-classified to represent their structural descriptions for the individual fictional characters, specific locales of their activities, the personal relationships that obtained between them, the ordinary features of life in their respective communities and the conflicts which existed between the different social groupings. It should be noted however that merely grouping together the discrete discourse units expressing particular units of information does not necessarily lead to the reconstruction of a coherent account of a reader's experience of any constituent of the fictional world. This is because the units are of necessity decontextualised and discontinuous. They will have to be reformulated to reclaim as much of the original context from which they were taken as possible and to make them cohere with other discourse units in the description. The reformulation should simplify the expression and remove all repetitions, dysfluencies and information fragments that cannot be made to merge with the rest of the description. The objective here is to recapture the essential structure of the reader's experience of the fictional world. For example the following sample shows regrouped units describing Auntie Araba's physical appearance:

- 03.01. Yes, Auntie Araba here, always dressed neatly, puts on the best as she can think of. She is always looking neat, she puts on her neat clothes. She puts on the best scarf.
- 03.09. Though she is old she still looks elegant. She still looks beautiful
- 03.10. and many people talk about her beauty.
- 04.34. Oh she looked very odd. She looked very different from those in the village here

The segments numbered 03.01 and 03.09 may be reconstructed by applying the processes of simplification to remove the occurrence of repetitions. The two units may be reconstructed as

(i) Auntie Araba dressed with good taste (or “Auntie Araba dressed beautifully”).

(ii) Though old she still looked beautiful and elegant.

The segment numbered 04.34 needs to be recontextualised and simplified. The unit is supposedly describing how Auntie Araba looked when she returned to her village from the city, where she had been staying with the lady relative. It may be reconstructed as,

(iii) When Araba returned home from the relative in the city she looked different from the other villagers.

The reconstructed unit retrieves the relevant context enabling it to cohere with the surrounding text.

It is also necessary to reorganise the regrouped units into a coherent temporal order (Koivisto et al 2002) in which the information was presented to the reader. The units in the extract below are not presented in any kind of order. Even though all of them deal with Auntie Araba’s personal background and identity, some of them relate to Auntie Araba’s baking business, others deal with some happenings that affected her situation of life. They need some reorganisation to establish order in the presentation.

02.17. Auntie Araba must have been a baker because of the oven side

02.20. Auntie Araba must have been very smart to bake her bread on market days and other holidays when most people will go to the market in their large numbers.

04.13. Either she got pregnant...

04.17. Ah. She must have become pregnant with the lady’s husband.

06.10. Auntie Araba was lucky she got Egya Nyaako because the young women are saying he was a good man himself.

07.24. We can’t tell why. Maybe she was too busy to make them or that her husband wasn’t able to make any.

10.45. Now she has a child out of wedlock, which has made her ineligible, a less suitable candidate for a good marriage.

The temporal order of events in the narrative indicates that Araba became pregnant before she became a baker and that also predated her marriage to Egya Nyaako. The

units in the extract above may be reconstructed and reordered in the following way to capture the essence of the reader's representation in a more systematic way:

- (i) Araba may have become pregnant.
- (ii) The lady's husband may be the one responsible for her pregnancy.
- (iii) She now has a child out of wedlock, which makes her a less suitable candidate for marriage.
- (iv) The oven indicates she must have taken to baking bread in order to take care of herself and her child.
- (v) She must have been smart to have baked her bread on market days and other holidays when there were a lot of people around to buy from her.
- (vi) Araba must have been lucky to have married Egya Nyaako, who the young women are saying was a good man.

The regrouped categories of data will therefore not merely be a collection of discrete and unrelated items of information but will be coherent structure of interwoven discourse expressing the reader's experience. The structural representations will then be searched for repetitive statements, which will be removed to leave non-repetitive lists of descriptive statements. This is what is referred to as the reader's 'constituent profile' (Holroyd 2001). Since in this research each participant read two texts, two constituent profiles were constructed for every reader, one for each text. Each reader's constituent profile will therefore consist of their representations for each of the characters of interest, their personal relationships, the features of life within the wider communities and the conflicts which existed between the different social groupings.

6.3.1.3. Developing thematic indexes

The next step in the analysis is to apply Husserlian imaginative variation (Moustakas 1990) to the constituent profiles to extract major themes from them. After repeated readings of subjects' constituent profiles, it was realised that readers were generally occupied with the processes whereby characters individually suffer personal

disintegration, that is, the ways in which certain forces threaten the character's personal integrity pushing them towards decline and sometimes death. The readers were found be concentrating on the effects of such forces on the character's body, economic status and social life, mental and emotional balance, moral integrity and

Table 6.8: Sample of themes and variations extracted from readers’ protocols

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Variations</i>
Human body	Physical form and appearance, physical wholeness and changes
Character behaviour	Moral integrity, natural goodness and compassion
Mental and emotional situation	Mental and emotional sanity
Socio-economic status	Public roles, social acceptance and economic stability
Control of life	Life challenges and the struggle against others

their control of life. Table 6.8 presents these themes and the variations that may be developed from them. After these themes had been isolated from the data, the constituent profiles were then reconstituted into thematic indexes for each reader. This involved reassigning categorised units of data from their constituent profiles to the different themes. That is, for example, the reader’s references to the character, Brian’s mental and emotional situation were reassigned from wherever they occur in the reader’s constituent profile to their appropriate heading on the thematic index.

6.3.1.4. Developing composite thematic indexes

The procedures described so far were carried out for the individual readers and each thematic index is an ideographic or personal list of relevant themes. For the analysis to lead to the identification of distinctions between the groups, rather than between individual readers, it was necessary to develop for each group thematic lists which contain the combined responses of all the members of the group for each text. Two thematic indexes had been developed for each reader, one for each story to arrive at forty thematic indexes; ten indexes for each text, for each group. What needed to be done now was to combine the ten Group 1 thematic indexes for Text 1 into one

composite thematic index and combine their ten thematic indexes for Text 2 into another composite thematic index. The same was done for Group 2. We were then left with two composite thematic indexes for each group.

Developing composite thematic indexes is a painstaking process of comparing the texts for convergences and divergences. It was necessary to find out which meaning units were repeated in the different individual indexes so as not to repeat them in the composite index. To make entries into the composite index it was necessary to assemble units from the different reader indexes which expressed the same idea and either to choose one of them which expressed that idea in the most concise form or, if necessary, to make a new formulation that captured the essence of the idea units. For example the readers Andy (Br) and Monica (Br) made the following responses to the text that Jean went alone to the graveyard in the dark:

MONICA: "I think something terrible is happening to her she needs time to think."

ANDY: "She must be feeling so sad she can't come to terms."

It seems both units express the common idea that she must be experiencing some kind of distress; it is difficult for her to get over it. Either expression could be used to represent the idea. The second one however appears to be more concise. The examples below are responses to textual information that the man in the car sighed when Jean refused to kiss him:

MONICA: He gets a bit down by her. / He sighs that she is always like this.

KARIN: That could be him talking in a really in a sad kind of manner. / Oh Jean why are you being like that?

Even though Karin's text seems more dramatic, Monica's expressions are more concise, and may be better used to represent the idea units which the two of them represent here.

The purpose here is to generate non-repeating lists of idea units that bring together the full sense of all the units entered for group members' individual thematic

indexes. The composite thematic index is developed to allow us to examine the data collectively. As Holroyd (2001) has indicated, with this step the phenomenological investigator moves from an ideographic explication of an individual's experience to a more generalised description of the group's representation. At this part of the analysis the objective is not to account for personal meanings in ideographic descriptions but to account for group experience in more generalised nomothetic descriptions.

6.3.2. Analysis of thematic descriptions

6.3.2.1. Characters' moral integrity

For each text readers had to make evaluative responses about characters' sexual behaviour. In the Scottish text, Jean, married to Brian, runs an affair with a man from her work place. In the Ghanaian text, the young Auntie Araba gets involved with her lady relative's lawyer husband and gets pregnant by him, a situation some readers referred to as incest. Also, Auntie Araba's son, Ato, first gets the schoolgirl, Mansa, pregnant and then gets another girl from his college pregnant. But the moral issue that attracted greatest reader interest had to do with the "immoral" behaviour of young girls in the cities. The analysis here will focus specifically on readers' handling of the affair between Jean and her boss in the Scottish text, and the reported prostitution practised by young girls with big city men in the Ghanaian text.

Jean's affair with the man from her work place required that readers address the question of whether her behaviour in the car was merely an illicit and immoral affair or whether it was a courageous and sacrificial attempt to save herself and her husband. They also apparently had to determine whether the man's action with Jean was completely a corrupt use of a female subordinate or a sincere and genuine attempt to establish a loving relationship.

In a way, both groups found Jean's behaviour in the car quite unacceptable. Some Ghanaians particularly were baffled that she could be praying in the cemetery for it

to be well between her and her husband and then get into a car at the edge of the cemetery and do what she did with the man in it, and then leave the car and look at her husband's photo, which had been in her bag all the while. Jean, for them, exhibited the typical features of a woman torn between her husband and another man, or someone finding a way to jilt her husband.

But most British readers realised that Jean was not really participating in what was going on in the car and they began looking for reasons why she was doing what she was doing. They (just like the Ghanaians) suggested that she might be doing this to save her job. But for the British group, one answer invariably led to another question and to another answer and so on. They surrounded themselves with several reasons why the woman should be doing this:

- (i) Her problems with her legs make her unsuitable for warehouse work and should otherwise lose her job.
- (ii) Her life situation is so desperate that she cannot cope without the job.
- (iii) She is bound to this man who seeks to control her.
- (iv) She has to do this or accept the consequences.
- (v) She is doing this for herself and her husband so they can maintain grasp of life until they can be on their own.
- (vi) She is having the affair with the man for money.
- (vii) Brian's emotional and mental decline might have made him unable to satisfy her physical needs.

The British readers, naturally, admit that Jean's behaviour is constrained by external pressures. In Kelley's (1967) correspondent theory of attribution, dispositional causes will not be inferred when the subject is under external pressure to produce a particular behaviour. This is what is referred to as the 'discounting principle' (see Culpepper 1996). The multiplication of reasons why Jean behaves the way she does indicates that there is some form of ambiguity in the mind of readers as to the reason for her behaviour. If they had entirely excused the behaviour and found it completely normal within the circumstances, then they would have arrived at some kind of synthesis and closure on the matter. While most British readers referred to Jean as human being of great value forced into a situation where she cannot cope,

there was no such thing as closure in the responses they tended to make. While they generally could not call what Jean did a sin, they also could not excuse it. The prevailing sentiment was one of wonder as to why she was doing that against God, to whom she was persistently praying, and against her husband, whom she genuinely loved. Characteristically, readers from the British group shifted from one position of condemnation to another position of admiration; it was not straightforward, how they evaluated Jean's sexual behaviour.

Davies & Harre (1997) find the situation of shifting subject positioning to be integral to the discursive processes of co-constructing narratives. What is happening is that, in most cases, British readers (rather than Ghanaian readers) are finding, in a moral reflection on what was going on, a conflict in which parts of them are motivated to adopt a certain evaluative position, while other tendencies within them arise in opposition, ending in what Mead (1913:379) calls "partial disintegration" of the self. Within the consciousness of the reader exists a pair of opposites coexisting in the Heraclitean sense and therefore generating conflict (Beebe 2002). Readers could not therefore be located either at the position of condemnation or of admiration. They are assumed to acquire a "dialogical self", which covers an imaginal space between the two positions (Bhatia 2002). The difference between the British and the Ghanaian groups is that while the former group consistently adopted a dialogical position towards Jean's behaviour in the car, the latter group held a monologic attitude towards her; no conflict in their minds, straightforward condemnation of her.

The groups may be seen as tending to adopt the same dialogic/monologic positioning with regards to the evaluations of the man who was with Jean in the car. Most British readers began with a physical representation of a man, which was not all that positive. Many assumed that Jean might not have liked him or thought well of him. They found his gesture of throwing away a cigarette which he had only then lighted quite definitive of his treatment of Jean, that he was out to use the female and dispose of her just as he had disposed of the cigarette. Generally, they found him quite forceful, not giving her any consideration. For some British readers the man was a stereotypical man who wanted to be in control. Those who saw the man this way

deplored his action in the car, which they saw as easy sex for him. They mainly imagined that he could be a married man who wanted to avoid being seen with her. Some British readers thought he treated Jean like a distant employee and they wondered how many women in his factory he may be having affairs with. Most of them thought that the man could be Jean's boss, and he treated her like a lot of men try to do especially in the work place where they think they can dominate the working girls as unimportant, as purely sexual objects. They found it disgusting that the poor woman was being used.

In spite of the above most British readers, at the same, time held a completely contrasting view of this man to those just presented. They saw him as someone relaxed, who wanted to relax Jean when he realised her discomfort and that he wanted to help her sort things out. He seemed to them to be sympathetic, concerned, and wanted her to touch him. He appeared to them as a more positive person than Jean, and that he tried to be supportive. He might not be a bad guy. They saw him as quite a patient guy because he did not tell Jean instantly what he wanted. These readers noted that the man himself was let down by Jean's behaviour, and he complained sadly why Jean was always like that. They identified him as someone who might not be high up himself, that he might be one of the small people. They were assuming that this man was seeking more involvement, which Jean did not allow. They also noted that he was not afraid to be seen with Jean by Brian, and that all he wanted was for Jean to be safe.

It might seem to an observer that these readers were talking about different individuals or at least about the same individual in different situations. It is notable that readers from the British group generally ran these two contrasting narratives about the man at the same time. At every point in the development of the story line their positions shifted and they made no attempt to formally repudiate an earlier story they had constructed for the man, revise it or try to replace it with another story. What the most readers from that group did with their representations of the man is quite illustrative of an observation by Davies and Harre (1997) when they say,

Human beings are characterized both by continuous personal identity and by discontinuous personal diversity. It is one and the same person who is variously positioned in a conversation.

The position which the British readers tended to adopt in relation to the man was multiple, shifting and coincident with the imaginal space between the sincere individual who was seeking a loving relationship and a corrupt work place superior who abused a female subordinate.

Readers' treatment of the behaviour of girls in the city with big men is a good example of how proximity to the cultural background of a text allows the reader access to a wide range of presuppositions and background assumptions to interpret

Table 6.9: Ghanaian readers' representation of prostitution in the city

<i>Dimension of Phenomenon</i>		<i>Incidence</i>
Nature of participation	Young girls	Sleeping with men Sitting in flashy cars Dating different men Dressing with other people's money
	City big men	Engaging in extra marital affairs Buying girls' bodies Taking advantage of girls Patronising girls Getting girls pregnant Channelling money away from families to girls Spreading diseases Encouraging the girls to stand by the road sides Tolerating no complaints
Causes of girls' involvement		Being beset with poverty Coming from broken homes Being ignorant Having no clear options Lacking counsellors Falling into the hands of established immoral women
Kinds of girls involved		The naïve and gullible The uneducated Rural migrants in the city

textual phenomenon. Structurally, both groups of readers adopted the same positions: the girls do what they do because they cannot cope with the rich life style of the city; that prostitution could quite be commonplace, and that it is a sign of

morality going downhill. But generally the Ghanaian treatment of the topic is more comprehensive and indicative of a more direct experience with the phenomenon, as Table 6.9 shows. The representation of the involvement of young girls in prostitution in the city opens with the construction of the girls as people enjoying some sort of flamboyant lifestyle they are not entitled to. This may be seen as censuring them for vanity. The behaviour of the big men is represented as destructive not only to the girls, but also to themselves and their families. They may be liable to the stronger charge of moral corruption. Note what they tended to see as causes of the girls involvement in prostitution. There is no explanation given as to why the men are involved. The entries made for the kinds of girls involved clearly project them as victims of the system. The culprits of the practice of prostitution and for the decline of morality are, in the minds of most of these readers, the big men, not young girls they trap into abusive relationships. This elaborate portrayal of the practice of prostitution in the city seems to be a rehearsal of well-established social representations of the phenomenon, which readers mainly assumed to be presupposed by repertoire of norms evoked by the text. Moscovici's (1981) idea of social representations refers to group descriptions of taken for granted aspects of reality, which may be appropriated by group members to guide responses to the object of the representation. Carugati et al (1994), focusing on social representations as public accounts of public phenomena, found three components or dimensions in social representations:

- (i) information: knowledge about the object
- (ii) a structure or organisation of the information about the object
- (iii) attitude: defined as an evaluative dimension, be it positive or negative.

The representations which Ghanaians mostly used in accounting for prostitution involving young girls in the cities largely follow this structure by detailing information about the phenomenon, which they organised in a definite structure and used to express their own attitudes. Those representations may therefore be seen as pre-existing discursive and cognitive materials which salient features of the text enabled them to appropriate as materials for fictional representation.

6.3.2.2. Characters' struggle for control of their lives

The analysis of readers' representation of characters' struggle for the control of their lives will concentrate on two protagonists in whom readers showed much interest: Jean for the Scottish text, and Auntie Araba for the Ghanaian text. Reader focus on Jean concentrated on the apparent wreckage of her dreams and also on her determined effort to cling on to hope. For Auntie Araba readers mostly focused on her struggle against great odds, which some people thought could wreck their lives. The analysis will account for readers' representations of the situations which threatened to deny the characters control of own their lives and the values they assume characters could access or should access in order to maintain a grasp of their lives. The objective is to underline the differences in the discursive practices between the two groups.

Table 6.10 presents a summary of each group's representation of the situation that confronts the Scottish character, Jean, and the modality of her struggle. In explicating Greimas' grammar of narrativity, Rulewicz (1995) argued that an actant-subject must first want or desire to achieve an aim, but he must also know the way to achieve that aim in order to be able to act accordingly. In addition the subject must possess the modal value of 'being able', that is, to have the possibility of achieving that aim. In the present analysis, I make use of the values, 'belief' and 'attitude', which are the readers' ways of assessing the character's inner disposition to affect the situation that confronts them. 'Capability', may refer to skills, social connections, or even physical strength, which may stand a character in a good stead to achieve an aim. In the system used here, 'capability' is limited to the mental and psychological potentials accessible to the character, and which can affect their response to the situation that confronts them. 'Activity' accounts for the sequences of behaviours undertaken or planned to be undertaken by the character to affect the situation which confronts them. It may be noted from the table that Group 2 had no entry for capability. That implies they were operating with a relatively simpler modal framework in their representation of character struggles. Also a look at the entries for 'Situation' indicates their much simpler and more superficial assessment

of the situation the woman faces. The Group 1 entry, 'Loss of grasp of life', unlike the Group 2 entry 'personal domestic worries', is a global category encompassing what readers assume to be the loss of direction in life, being trapped in a horrible situation, coming to a dead end, having nothing, living on illusions, pathological awareness of the transience of life, confined in a room, like in the graveyard, where things are decayed, green and grey, old and withered. Note also that Group 2 did not consider declining marital relationship and overwhelming work commitments as part

Table 6.10: Representations of a character's (Jean's) struggle for control

Group	Situation	Modality of struggle				
		Desire	Belief	Attitude	Capability	Activity
1	(i) Loss of grasp of life (ii) Declining marital relationship (iii) Overwhelmed by work (iv) Trapped in a desperate extramarital situation	(i) More caring humanity (ii) Close relationship with God (iii) Fulfilled marriage (iv) Financial security	(i) In God (ii) In self (iii) Access to God in special situations (iv) Belief in God in the physical sense	(i) Openness to hope (ii) General unconcern (iii) Courage (iv) Negative dispositions (v) Conflict of will	(i) Strength of mind (ii) Spiritual sensitivity (iii) mental weakness	(i) Resistance to the man (ii) Struggle (iii) Confronting reality (iv) Mental & emotional engagement (v) Sacrifice
2	(i) Personal domestic worries (ii) Trapped in a desperate extramarital situation	(i) Financial security (ii) Better relationship with husband	(i) Belief in God	(i) Openness to hope (ii) General unconcern (iii) Courage (iv) Naivety (v) Kind & generous (vi) Negative dispositions (vii) Conflict of will		(i) Resistance to the man (ii) Mental & emotional engagement

of the situation the character faces. The two groups however agree that Jean is trapped in a desperate extra-marital situation. She is assumed to be giving sexual favours to keep her job, but cannot even accept an offer of increased pay, assistance with work and another offer to opt out of the relationship even though she is so unhappy with what she is doing. It may be accepted that British readers tended to

project the character's concern beyond her individual self with the entry of the desire for a more caring humanity. That insight offers readers the opportunity to look at the situation the character is facing as something more widespread, affecting many significant others. Group 1 readers also make the profoundly insightful observation that Jean wants to be closer to God, which introduces something of the sublime and intangible into the range of desires. The Group 1 entry of desire for a fulfilled marriage goes beyond the Group 2 entry of a better relationship with husband. It includes the expectations that the marriage will survive, the initial passion will be rekindled, she will be safe with her husband and that she will be pregnant.

Both groups admit to the woman's belief in God. Group 1 readers however add to this, belief in herself, and in the accessibility to God, which seems to expand the range of inner dispositions which she can access to make an effect on the situation that confronts her. When it comes to 'Attitude' the two groups seem to agree in most cases. The Group 2 entries however include her kindness and generosity, and also naivety. Both groups recognise the woman's courage. But it is only Group 1 readers who indicate that she is not scared of the man she meets in the car, she does not feel a victim at all. What is meant by 'strength of mind' under 'Capability' is the character's willingness to stand against very difficult situations and not give up. It is not the opposite of mental weakness, which in most readers' constructions meant limited mental outlook. 'Spiritual sensitivity', which only Group 1 readers talk about, has to do with Jean's ability to feel close to God at the cemetery, and to feel real among the tombs.

Readers from both groups agree on the fact of the woman's attempts at resistance. For them the resistance takes the form of emotional withdrawal from the sexual interaction with the man in the car. She tries to take the whole thing off her mind. Most British readers however add that she does not cheer him, she does not ask him, she is not afraid to refuse him in many ways, she just allows him to do what he pleases. The suggestion that the woman remains inviolate even after the exchange is generally more convincing with the Group 1 representation than it is with the Group 2 representation. 'Mental and emotional engagement' refers to Jean's attempt to take

time away from the rush of life and try to focus on her situation, go to the cemetery to talk to God, and carry Brian's old picture to remind herself that all is not lost. Note that Group 1 entries include 'struggle' and 'confronting reality'. They may have got those ideas from comparing what Jean was doing and what her husband Brian was doing. While she was out in the wilderness buffeted by the elements, praying, resisting the man who wanted to control her, Brian avoided all that, remained in the flat, trying to get warm by burning newspapers. What Group 1 readers meant by 'sacrifice' is their recognition that what Jean allowed the man to do to her in the car, she did it for Brian, or for Brian and for herself, so that they may hold on until they could be on their own. It is for this reason that she does not care whatever happens to her. The group's general representation of Jean's response to the situations of threat to her personal integrity is very close to the Arthur Miller's (1949:1) modernist idea of the tragic in the common man,

(W)e are here in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing—his personal dignity.

It is clear from the analysis that in their constructions of the modalities of Jean's struggle for control of life, Group 1 readers tended to make more extensive and complex descriptions than Group 2 readers did. Note that where the first group made more complex representations than the second group had to do with the more inner, abstract and general forms of the struggle the woman was supposed to have been involved in.

It may be noted that there are some modal values with conceptually opposite categories entered for them. For example, in addition to Jean's noted belief in God, Group 1 readers also have her belief in God in the physical sense and also that access to God was possible only under special conditions. This, for many of them, was a misguided view of God or religion. Also in addition to the positive features entered for 'Attitudes', there is entered 'negative dispositions', which is supposed to include such attitudes as hopelessness, pessimism about life, being quite a morose person and being obsessed with the past. She is also beset by 'conflicts of will', which means, for instance, that she shifts from wishing to be with the man in the car, and then

regretting what she was doing with him. Sometimes what readers once noted as a positive feature, they turn round to treat as a negative feature. For example, at one point readers in Group 1 considered her show of unconcern as something positive and then at another point they turned round to evaluate that feature as something naïve. It is not definite whether those readers think Jean's life is merely a wrecked dream or that or it is a determined adherence to hope. It seems both these positions were held in their minds. The question whether she had a hand on the modal values needed to make a determined stand against the factors that undermine the control of her own life is not clearly answered. This is an example of the dialogical positioning, in which contrary values exist in the mind of the reader simultaneously; and it was more pervasive with Group 1 readers.

Readers' representation of struggles which Auntie Araba had to go through in her attempts to exercise control over her own life were quite diffuse. They may however be organised around four narrative situations:

- (i) Araba starting the baking business
- (ii) Araba bringing up her child
- (iii) The lawyer making a claim for Araba's child
- (iv) Araba making preparations for the marriage between Ato and Mansa

I will concentrate on the second of these situations to demonstrate how readers handled the challenges which Araba faced and how the groups differed in their discursive approaches.

Table 6.11 is a summary of the two groups' representations of Auntie Araba's struggle to bring up her child. The analysis here is focused on two features: (i) Araba struggling to give her child good school education; (ii) Araba spoiling her son. Within the framework used in the analysis, 'Desire' expresses what readers consider to be the motivations behind the kind of upbringing Araba gave her child. It may be noted that while both groups have entries for what Araba wanted for her child, only Group 1 had entries for what Araba wanted for herself in the way she brought up her child. On the matter of his education, both groups agreed that she wanted a good life for the child. They both presupposed that she saw school education as the means by

which she could secure this good life for the boy's future. Group 1 readers added that she wanted him to be like the big people, compensate for defects in her own upbringing and redeem herself. These motivations have in them the idea that parents

Table 6.11: Representations of Araba's upbringing of her child

Group	Situation	Modality of struggle				
		Desire	Knowledge	Capability	Attitude	Activity
1	Bringing up her child	(i) Wanted better options for child (ii) Wanted a stable future for him (iii) Wanted to provide for his needs (iv) Wanted his love (v) Wanted to compensate for defects in her upbringing (vi) Wanted to redeem herself (vii) Wanted child to be like big people	(i) Had no idea what kind of man he was going to be	(i) Does not seem to be thinking deeply about things (ii) Lack of depth of character	(i) Relaxed caring person (ii) Blinded to child's faults (iii) May have been jealous of rich big people	(i) Provided child with school education (ii) Spoiled her child
2	Bringing up her child	(i) Wanted child to grow into responsible adulthood (ii) Wanted to provide her child with his needs		Single parent out of wedlock	Understands education	(i) Provided child with school education (ii) Spoiled her child

want for their children life opportunities they themselves missed. It is part of the human need to vicariously live in those we consider to be significant others in our lives. These are more abstract and therefore less obvious motivations for the support the woman gave to her child's school education. On the issue of her spoiling her son, again readers from both groups agree that she wanted to provide him with all his needs, that is, she did not want him to lack anything. For Group 1 readers, this may have been for a purpose: she wanted his love. The point is that it is not just that Auntie Araba loved her child, she also needed the love of her child; and this might have been the reason why she spoiled him. It is obvious here that while most readers

agree on the tangible and stated motivations for which Araba sent her child to school and spoiled him, Group 1 readers, in addition, tended to explore more non-tangible and less obvious reasons for her actions. The Group1 entries for 'Attitude' seem to address in another way the two issues relating to the child's education and her spoiling of him. That she is a relaxed caring person and blind to his faults are presuppositions for her indulgent treatment of the boy and her inability to take any action to reform him. The other entry that she may have been jealous of the rich big people may be the implicit reason why she wanted her son to be like them. The points given here are not all that positive. This group did not consider the woman as an individual possessing the required parental attitude to bring up a well-behaved child. Group 2, it may be noted, was generally concerned with the education she gave her son and implicit in the recognition of her understanding of education is the presupposition that education is a good thing and that she is well disposed to achieve it for her child. Group 1 readers are generally not found to be making those presuppositions.

Group 1 entries for 'knowledge' and 'capability' focus on the fact that the boy did not grow up well in spite of the education his mother gave him. They attribute this to the personal qualities that the woman lacked: her inability to think deeply about things and her ignorance of the kind of man her son was going to be as a result of the upbringing she was giving him. Group 2 readers almost invariably put the reason for the boy's defective character not to deficiencies in the mother herself as a person, but to her lack of a supporting husband in the upbringing of the child. While Group 1 readers locate the fault somewhere within the woman, her natural temperament; readers from Group 2 put it somewhere outside of her, her marital status.

It is again clear here that Group 1 readers showed greater preparedness to look more closely at inner psychological sources of human behaviour. In their conception of Auntie Araba, with regards to the modalities of her struggle to bring up her child and in that way she tried to gain control over aspects of her life, they somehow uncovered faults and weaknesses internal to Araba's character and temperament

which contributed to the boy's latter disastrous behaviour. Their characterisation is therefore more complex, more human and therefore more believable.

The qualitative analysis thus far has corroborated the findings of the quantitative analysis that for both the Scottish and Ghanaian texts the British group of readers constructed more complex, sometimes apparently contradictory, representations which explored the inner lives the fictional characters, assessing them from different perspectives. They focused on exploring and uncovering characters' unasserted motives, hidden temperaments, undeclared weaknesses and strengths. They therefore understood the fictional characters quite intimately as believable human persons, whose behaviours were not so easy to judge. Ghanaian readers, on the other hand, were generally happier talking about issues relating to social reality, and therefore tended to treat aspects of characters' lives as relating to public life in general.

6.3.3. Meaning construction and reader identity

The qualitative analysis has so far focused on group differences in their treatment of a selection of general themes they were concerned with in their construction of fictional representations. It is necessary in a study of narrative comprehension also to be concerned with how individual readers relate pragmatically to the fictional information they are dealing with and how this relation creates for them certain identities. By identity, I am referring to the reader's inner environment (Zavalloni 1993), which determines all that they think and feel to make individual sense of fictional character and situation. In pursuit of this understanding, I will concentrate now on one reader, Karin, from the British group, and investigate how she related to the fictional text, by focusing on the kind of things that concerned her about the characters' individual experiences, how she empathised with them, the similarities and differences that emerge between her and the characters, the ideological positions she adopts and how she handles contests between different ideological positions. In studying Karin's identity as a reader, it is necessary for me to keep at hand meaning constructions and viewpoints that separate her from the other readers. I will also

make references to the other readers in the study to draw attention to similarities and differences between her and the others.

6.3.3.1. Reader concern and fictional construction

This section of the analysis will focus on the kind of situations that attracted the reader's special concerns and therefore determined the kind of representations she constructed for characters and fictional situations. According to Archer (2001)

What we are, is a matter of what we care about most, the ultimate concerns which make our actions ultimately intelligible.

In studying Karin's concerns with fictional character and situation I will be keeping track of the presuppositions, self-recognitions and the myths she imposes on the stories and the characters in order to make sense of what is going on.

A close examination of Karin's responses to textual information will show that she tends to drag the pace of the narrative whenever she senses that certain elements of the character's individuality or humanity are under some kind of threat. She does the same thing when she becomes aware of certain specific features of the character's life which make them attractive, unique and therefore admirable. I am using her response to one narrative situation in the Scottish text and her responses to situations which particularly involved two characters in the Ghanaian text to demonstrate the kind of things that concern this reader.

6.3.3.1.1. Character experience and reader concern

One situation in which Karin showed great concern in her reading of the Scottish text was Jean's involvement with a man from her workplace in a car just outside a cemetery. Understanding of what was going on came to the reader in two stages: (i) a purely sexual meeting and (ii) a stereotypical case in which a superior at the workplace abuses a female subordinate. Table 6.12 summarises her representation during her first stage of cognition. It may be noted that the reader runs one narrative

for Jean and two narratives for the man. Jean is doing something she would rather not do and she might have spent time at the cemetery to prepare for this meeting, which was something quite unpleasant to her. The man, on his part, is first seen as someone seeking to violate the woman and then he is seen as a sincere lover who is seeking more romance with the woman. The representation is quite complex here. While Jean is liable to negative evaluation if the man is a sincere lover and may not be liable to censure if the man is not a sincere lover, the man is liable to censure whether he is a sincere lover or not because (i) if he is a sincere lover then he is doing something he should not be doing because the woman seems to prefer not to be

Table6.12: Reader’s initial representation of Jean’s meeting with man in the car

<i>Character</i>	<i>Relational behaviour</i>	<i>Nature of encounter</i>	<i>Reader’s evaluation</i>
Jean	(i) Abrupt (ii) Does not care for him (iii) May be getting money for this (iv) May have gone to cemetery to relax and seek release for this	(i) Lack of passion (ii) Businesslike (iii) No compassion (iv) Incongruity of her having been to the cemetery (v) No relationship at all (vi) Meeting purely for sex	(i) Sordid relationship (ii) Seedy kind of thing (iii) A really corrupt kind of image
The man	(i) Forceful (ii) Forward (iii) Dominating (iv) Does not care where she has been (v) Knows she has been to the cemetery (vi) Wants to sort her out (vii) May be looking after her in some way (viii) Wants to be more romantic		

doing this thing, and (ii) if he is not a sincere lover then he should not be doing what he is doing because the woman, who seems to be the weaker partner, evidently does not to prefer that this was going on. The reader reserves her criticism for this encounter not merely because it was a sexual kind of meeting but because there was no passion, no relationship, no compassion from either party; and it was incongruous with her recent visit to the cemetery. Generally the man is seen as a villain because he behaves as the dominant partner and Jean is seen as a victim because she is the weaker partner. Evidently, it is the immorality of one individual imposing their will on another individual that attracts Karin’s censure. Note that Karin does not evoke

any religious tenet to guide her evaluation of what is going on. She approaches the situation from the purely humanistic point of view. There are two adult individuals clearly not in love with each other, and yet involved in activity profoundly basic to human life and relationship. It is for this reason that she initially evaluates the deed as sordid, corrupt and seedy.

The second stage of the cognition is even more complex. There is light thrown on the nature of the partnership and this goes beyond

Table 6.13: Reader’s subsequent representation of Jean’s meeting with the man in the car

<i>Jean</i>		<i>The man’s relational behaviour/attitude</i>	<i>Nature of the encounter</i>	<i>Reader’s evaluation</i>
<i>Relational behaviour/attitude</i>	<i>Situation</i>			
(i) She does not seem to care (ii) She is not really listening to him (iii) She is allowing him to do whatever he wants (iv), She allows him to use her (v)) She doesn’t care about her body as a temple no one can touch (vi) She is going to feel good about herself (vii) She does not want anyone to look after her (viii) She wants time for herself, maybe to think	i) She is in a difficult situation (ii) Maybe she is getting something (iii) Maybe she feels trapped (iv) She realises she has no option, she cannot take his offer to withdraw (v) She is just a cog in the system situation (vi) She does not feel bothered by what has happened at all (vii) She does not feel like a victim (viii) He has no grasp over her (ix) It is clear she just changes the situation	(i) Maybe he is dominating (ii) Maybe he genuinely likes her (iii) He is willing to increase her pay and ease her job (iv) He does not make offer of withdrawal with compassion (v) He treats Jean as a distant employee (vi) He is more important than her at the work place (viii) She is just another female he can use	(i) She is doing this like many women at the workplace (ii) It is a stereotypical case of a woman abused at the workplace	(i) Sorry for Jean (ii) It is disgusting this poor woman is being used

the specificities of their meeting in a car outside a cemetery in the dark. Table 6.13 summarises Karin’s understanding of the changing significances of the meeting. Note that the entries under Jean’s relational behaviour/attitude depict her as someone who is putting up an inner resistance against the man and whatever he is outwardly doing to her. She is not involved; she remains inviolate.

Entries under Jean’s situation however may be seen as split into Jean who is vulnerable and Jean who prevails. There are therefore two narratives going for Jean, colliding against each other, each maintaining a position in the reader’s mind. In the same way entries for the man may be seen as two different narratives running at the same time, (i) represents him as genuine and sincere lover (ii) represents him as corrupt exploiter of a workplace subordinate. What is going on here is a dialogue between the reader’s instinct, which seeks to acquit the man of wrongdoing and also free Jean from any situation of domination; and textual evidence, which represents Jean as someone trapped in a difficult situation and condemns the man who exploits

Table 6.14: Sample of reader responses to Jean’s meeting with the man in the car

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Response</i>
Andy (Br)	She is working at the production line where he is manager, and she cannot free herself from the desperate situation
Helen (Br)	She feels tied down, not in control
Jacqueline (Gh)	He is giving her the chance to stop whatever is making her unhappy and she seems not to take the chance
Martin (Br)	It is quite unusual that she refuses his offers to improve her situation
Monica (Br)	He is giving her the chance to stop the relationship and if she keeps seeing him then she must care about him or wants something from him
Rose (Gh)	He is giving her the opportunity to opt out of whatever is making her unhappy and if she is not taking it then either she does not have a huge courage or she doesn't really have an option

her. Compare this reader’s shifting positioning to those arrived at by a sample of readers from both groups in the study presented on Table 6.14 The words “trapped”, “abused” and “lack of compassion” are parts of Karin’s representation of the situation which links her to the other readers represented. But she also uses the phrases, “no grasp over her” and “changes the situation”, which are not found in any of the summaries of the others presented.

Karin seems to be personally committed to the liberty of the vulnerable and her urge to search for excuses to exonerate people, especially the weak, of wrongdoing; gets entangled in those multiple subjectivities, not found in the responses of other readers. Jean’s triumph over the man in the car is a myth legitimised by Karin, from certain evidence which escapes the other readers. Note also Karin’s expression of evaluative

responses of compassion towards Jean, and disgust towards the man. What is happening in the car seems to be contrary to her assumptions and presuppositions about decent affairs between human individuals and her notions about sexual morality. At the same time she expresses unfailing belief in the individual's struggle for personal liberty.

6.3.3.1.2. Textual narratives and reader narratives

Karin had the tendency to run a number of narratives simultaneously and to fuse, or even impose her own narratives with the textual narrative. She does this to great effect in her reading of the Ghanaian text, where she imposes a mythical representation on the fictional character, Auntie Araba, and confers on her special attractiveness and considerable social importance. I wish to demonstrate this tendency in Karin by referring to her response to the textual information that on market days and other public holidays, Auntie Araba's ovenside became a little market on its own. Karin dealt with this information by basically isolating two centres of agency: an Auntie Araba, and a community of people, each responding to the other:

- (i) Auntie Araba is a good cook; the people appreciate her cooking.
- (ii) The people come to Auntie Araba; she uses meals to establish bonds within families.
- (iii) Auntie Araba has inherent goodness and sweetness; the people get to know her.
- (iv) The people enjoy congregating together; Auntie Araba relaxes them and helps them to have fun.

There comes then a concentration on the ovenside and then a shift again to the woman, Auntie Araba:

- (i) The ovenside was bustling with people.
- (ii) People came there to get their meals.
- (iii) It was also a place for bonding.
- (iv) The ovenside became the hub of community life.

- (v) Auntie Araba became a very important person, more special than anyone else.
- (vi) The analogy with honey shows how they respected her.

Compare Karin's elaboration here with the construction for the same text by Hilda, a Ghanaian reader:

Auntie Araba was a baker who baked very tasty bread,/ who had a big bakery /where people come and to take the bread and go and sell on retail basis./ And so on holidays and market days a lot of people surround the oven side so that when the bread is cooked they would take theirs and go and sell. / Auntie Araba might have been a very busy woman,/a woman with much money, a woman who can feed herself as well as relatives, / a woman who is lively, who sings alongside baking, / a woman whom every person might have liked.

There are obvious similarities between Karin's representation and Hilda's representation: the crowd and the busy lifestyle, excellent cooking, the general liveliness of the environment and Auntie Araba's popularity. However, while Hilda makes a representation of a purely commercial situation, Karin seems to project a communal, or even, religious situation. Note that Karin does not mention selling; neither does she mention money in her representation of the situation. On the other hand, there is none of the communal eating and familial bonding, general relaxation, fun making, and Araba's social importance in Hilda's representation. The difference may be due to Karin's tendency to idealise her characters and to luxuriate in their merits while making all attempts to insulate and make them strong against threats to their personal and individual integrity. The two readers therefore have different conceptions of the same character because of their different concerns in their responses to textual information. What is happening here is a common feature of text interpretation recently referred to by Cottle (2002) when he says that

In making interpretations we encounter the risk of pushing our own narratives against the narratives of others and we tend to rethink their stories in the light of our stories...We run the risk of making the story of the other become what we want it to become.

The process by which the words of the reader combine with the words of the text, each resonating in the other is how we infuse traces of ourselves into the narratives

of others. Karin here exposes her own romantic openness, partiality for communal bonding and innocent enjoyment of life.

Karin's expresses distress at every instance of societal pressure on individual characters, and this seems to be part of a more general aversion to domination of every kind. I have already noted her disgust for the relationship between Jean and the man in the car, which she called a corrupt, seedy and exploitative relationship because she saw it to be an imposition on the woman, who appeared to be the weaker partner. Karin's instinct seems to be for her to take a stand beside the weak and vulnerable; and while attempting to protect them against assaults of different kinds, she looks around everywhere for extenuating circumstances which will acquit them of culpability in any wrongdoing. She seldom does that for the dominant and powerful. Table 6.15 summarises some of her responses to narrative situations in which dominant male characters and subordinate female characters are involved.

Table 6.15: Karin's responses to specific narrative situations

<i>Narrative situation</i>	<i>Subject's response</i>
Report of girls selling their bodies in the cities	Changing times, declining values and growing disrespect for women have left them with no option but to resort to that kind of corruption.
Auntie Araba becoming pregnant with lady relative's lawyer husband	There is a dominance hierarchy going on here in which there could not have been any relationship with this man; the poor girl must have suffered grievous abuse.
Ato treating his mother, Auntie Araba, badly	The little boy learnt quite early to dominate women from copying older adults and realising that his mother was weak and would not fight back.
Ato making Mansa pregnant	Ato is a rough guy and could not have had a loving fairy tale relationship with the girl; he might have raped her.
Mansa turning out very well under the influence of Auntie Araba	Araba treated Mansa the same way she treated her son but she came out well; it shows the difference between men and women.
Villagers suspecting that Mansa would become a whore in the city	She might become a whore because it is a commonplace thing if you don't have money or any options in life..

Obviously what is going on here somehow illustrates the position taken by Holland (1975; 1973) when he talks about the reading situation as allowing the subject to project her/his own personal thoughts and emotions onto the text. Holland argues that you cannot talk consistently about a text as though it were completely separate from yourself, because it is not: you cannot perceive the text except through some

human process of perception, either your own or someone else's, a critic analyzing the work. One cannot perceive the raw, naked text. One can only perceive the text through some human process of perception, shaped by a human identity. Holland's point is that readers project themselves through the process of singling out and selecting particular elements of the text that reinforce their own identity themes.

6.3.3.2. The reader and ideological commitment

It seems that in the Ghanaian text, the reader found that males were in socially dominant position while females are in subordinate position. When Gergen (1996) notes that, "to mean is to view, to partake in a patterned set of relationships" he was referring to the ideological positionings that interpreters are frequently bound to take. Reading the Ghanaian text, Karin adopted the view that there is a struggle between males and females, and this view becomes for her an ideological stance from which she accounted for most of the happenings of the story. Consider the following exchange between the homodiegetic narrator and narratee:

Like you know my sister, after all was it not a lawyer or a doctor or something like that who was at the bottom of all Auntie Araba's troubles?
"I did not know that my sister."
Yes my sister, one speaks of it only in whispers.

The immediate context of this exchange of information was that young girls were selling their beauty in the towns, and that big educated men were encouraging them and that those men are up to no good themselves. Table 6.16 presents an analysis of Karin's response to this textual information. In her response she focuses on some of the major political concerns usually raised by women rights campaigners. Note her concentration on the issue of women's subordination under men, their exclusion from education and jobs, restriction to the home, attachment to traditional values and their denial of political voice. Converse to this is male privilege to education, jobs, personal improvement, and mobility. This is her conception of the struggle in society, the kind of violence she sees to be prevailing in society. The way she handles these issues, they seem to be commonsensical and something that should be universally obvious to every reader. But what is going on is a participation in an

ideological contestation. As Althusser (1971) puts it, she is “interpellated or hailed by ideology” to function as a subject in a specific category.

Table 6.16: An example of reader's ideological responses to textual information

<i>The social environment</i>	<i>The status of women</i>	<i>The status of men</i>
(i) There is a struggle between the sexes (ii) There is violence in society (iii) Things are getting worse here	(i) Women are being ruled by men (ii) Women are subordinated to men (iii) Women are not educated (iv) Women are not allowed to go to the towns and work there (v) Women are not endowed with respect (vi) They are to cook and look after the home and the kids, and those are their duties in life (vii) Their sex is closer to nature (viii) We reproduce and cook (ix) We are probably concerned with funerals, which are rites of passage (x) Women are associated with traditional values and men have moved on (xi) They have this kind of bond (xii) They cling together (xiii) They murmur together as sisters (xiv) But they cannot talk about the corruption and decline of morals going on (xv) Women cannot challenge their men (xvi) Women are scared of their men (xvii) Women are not getting any say in things (xviii) Women have no voices, another form of poverty	(i) Men are allowed to go to the towns (ii) Men are allowed to work in the towns (iii) Men are moving on and are not concerned with traditional values (iv) Men are getting higher (v) Education corrupts them by allowing them to venture out of their societies (vi) In towns they are drinking and buying women

Note also that the reader, in our case, dwells also on the negative effects of education on the character of males in society, and that she takes the stand that things are getting worse because of this. She also notes that women, as a powerless underclass, are binding together, murmuring together as sisters. These proposals are based partly from her own conceptions of evolutionary history of societies and partly from her special belief in the struggle of the disadvantaged and oppressed for their liberty. Here, there is a voice that is definitely the reader’s voice, but which gets intermingled with the voices of others: the voice of the speaking subject and the voice of the socio-political language through which this voice is ventriloquated (Hermans 2001; Skinner et al 2001). The reader here may be seen as “activating a pre-existing affective representational circuit” (Zavalloni 1993), which projects for her an identity that resonates with a particular view of the world. The

presuppositions of the reader and the inferences she constructs are partly shaped by the discursive practices of others (Davies and Harre 1997). Adams & Markus (2001) refer to those structures of knowledge drawn from a wider community of discussants as “inherited categories”, which are raw materials for individuals to construct identity. Reader identity is not meant to be categorical isolates nor individualised versions of an existing social identity; it is the mingling of an individual voice with the voice of the collectivity. Gover and Gavelek (1996) argue that

In isolation, personal attributes are meaningless. Only by positioning ourselves relative to social others do our personal attributes, vis-à-vis their own, come to orient and structure individual existence. We “have” a self or “acquire” an identity only in relation to, in dialogue with, a chorus of others. An identity, to be socially viable, must thus be constructed with the materials of pre-existing meaning systems. Its essence is neither wholly individual nor social. It is at issue any time people use words, symbols, or gestures *to map themselves onto the world.* (Italics in the original)

6.3.3.3. Literary empathy and reader identity

The analysis has already drawn attention to instances of this reader’s self implication, when she identifies herself with the alienated, the underclass. She actually does not only identify herself with them but also absorbs their emotions and endeavours to see things the way they do. Two of the entries for the status of women in Table 6.16 are “That is, we reproduce and cook” and “We are probably concerned with funerals, which are the rites of passage.” This is what Kuiken et al (2004) refer to as “self identification,” a process by which the reader recognises similarity between themselves and the story character. This step is vital to the literary process of empathy, which according to Schmid (2001) is putting oneself in the place of the other, in the inner world of experiencing the other, resonating to the melody the other plays, a process of common checking as the *alter ego* for the other, understanding what something means for the other. This form of literary experience occurs most profoundly for Karin in her reading of the Scottish text. Readers were generally puzzled and most of them thought it ironic that Jean should reach into her handbag for her husband’s picture, taken within the year they first met, just when she parts from the man in the car. Most readers were however impressed that she knows the picture by heart, and they concluded that she might have cared a lot for him.

Table 6.17 presents an analysis of Karin’s response to this textual information. Note the concentration on the images of the past and of the present, and the migration from this imagistic description to an account for Jean’s behaviour, and then to a generalisation of her behaviour and the expression of empathetic feelings. It is the experience of empathy that admits the reader into the inner life of the character and allows her to gain understanding of the character’s behaviour and situation in life.

Table 6.17: Narrative situation, empathy and reader insight

<i>Images (of Brian) past and present</i>	<i>Jean's behaviour</i>	<i>Generalisation of Jean's behaviour</i>	<i>Empathetic feelings</i>	<i>Reader's special insight into character's situation</i>
(i) Maybe he was young and everything was great. (ii) He was smiling, he was happy. (iii) There is the image of the sun shining. (iv) At the moment it is October and sleeting and the cold is horrible. (v) Nothing of Brian has survived. (vi) He is not the person he used to be.	(i) She keeps the photo in her bag to remind herself of how things used to be. (ii) She's got this mental image in her head too. (iii) She keeps going to that point in her life and just kind of wishing that it was still like that.	(i) Like a lot of people do, this is what photographs are for (ii) Like they are tokens of the past which make people contemplate what things used to be and what they were feeling at the time the photo was taken	(i) This is really sorrowful. (ii) So she's got this warm token which she is carrying with her; which is sad.	(i) She appreciates Brian for what he was. (ii) Maybe that is why she is still with him. (iii) Because she wants to remind herself of what things like young Brian used to be. (iv) Maybe the patterns are gone. (v) And she wants to remind herself of this and stay with him. (vi) The look on his face stands for something important for her.

According to Cottle (2002), when this happens we begin to appreciate what Robert Coles (1989) calls the “call of stories”, during which, in the words of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, we are compelled to take care of the Other. The narrative gives

birth to the devotion of one person to another and makes possible the discovery of what one defines as being human. Entries in the rightmost column of the table above record the reader's idea of what is human in the fictional character.

6.3.3.4. Character representation and reader identity

Even though empathy presupposes affiliation with the other and emotional contagion (Vreeke & Mark 2003) it does not mean identity with the other. The reader, Karin, recognises and names the difference between herself, and the characters she encounters in the narratives. She identifies Jean as one of these women at the bus stop, who also feels a sense of loss. Elsewhere she apologises for identifying Jean as a typical working mother, the kind that lives in council flats. Karin also distances herself from the women villagers of the Ghanaian story. She says,

When I am reading things about this kind of society, I just don't want to be part of it. It seems you are trapped and stuck in a way. I don't want to be trapped. No progress, just going round. You look at that and it is completely distant from here. And like what I am doing I can never have that problem. I can never be stuck in a village where I am subordinated. It is never like that. It makes me think that I am not like that. But these people enjoy the essence of life and know what life is about.

Cottle (2002) sees the moment of empathy as a case for self discovery, when the self sees itself in the other. The reader, according to Cottle, is given the opportunity to ratify the narrative of the other or refuse to do so, which is akin to the act of affirming or disaffirming the other. Cottle argues to the effect that at any moment the reader may choose or choose not to meet the eyes of the other or attend to the words of the other, and that indicates their decision to assume or abdicate responsibility for the other. The fact is that Karin finds the part of her which overflows with the zest for life, communal affiliation and bonding among women, very well represented in these women. But also there are present in the lives of these women some of her worst fears: submission to subordination, lack of opportunity, and exploitation on account of one's sex. She is like them, but not quite.

In his treatment of dialogue and empathy, Linell (2003) first highlights the common ground that gets established within the community of interlocutors, and then he

emphasises that dialogue is other-oriented (alterity). He indicates that alterity has two sides, commonality and difference. Linell refers to dialogical tensions and differences between people and traditions, boundaries between communities, knowledge, norms, and expectations, which are at times at variance between interlocutors, and then argues that while communication is oriented towards shared knowledge, there would be no point in communication if there were no differences and asymmetries of knowledge. The dialogical interplay involves taking the perspective of the other, but also interpreting (the other) by responding (or preparing a response) on one's own terms: imposing one's own meaning. The reader defines him/herself in terms of others, but what emerges is not identity, which is unity; but difference, which is alterity (c.f. Lazzarato 2003).

6.3.3.5. Reader identity and shifting positions

The last quote above, which is from the Karin's interview data, presents another feature quite interesting to the study of reader identity: shifts in dialogical positioning. While the reader does not want to be part of this rural sort of life because the women are trapped and subordinated, she also recognises that these people enjoy the essence of life. These indeed are divergent and opposite views of the fictional world. Lehtonen (1997:135) has pointed out that subjectivities are not simple and individual, but always fragmented and multidimensional and that becoming a subject is a complex process of unification and separation which takes place under the influence of biological, social and cultural factors. In a study of the self as a culture, Hermans (2001) evokes Bakhtin's ideas of the polyphonic novel, plurality of voices and juxtaposition in the narrative space to explain the existence of different and even opposing *I-positions* within the same individual. I wish to use an aspect of Karin's representation of the dynamics of female and male social relations in her reading of the Scottish text to throw more light on how the identity she was projecting became multiple, contested, shifting and embedded in different cultural and historical practices (Bhatia 2002).

The social role of the female in Karin's representations was largely determined by what her views were on what may be called "Alcestes' syndrome" and the woman's role in marriage. Alcestes syndrome may be referred to as the tendency in patriarchal societies for the female partner in marriage to submit herself to the painful destructive elements that threaten the lives of the couple or of the male partner, so that she can save the situation or at least her partner. The woman necessarily must be selfless and be ready to take up personal sacrifices. This is the image Karin constructs for Jean in her reading of the Scottish text. Quite early through the narrative Karin expresses admiration for Jean, for her selflessness in the prayer she makes at the cemetery. She pleads with God to help us to be good to each other. The reader recognises the harsh time the character was going through at the cemetery in order to make her prayer. She was suffering physical pain in her knees, she had to walk up a difficult and muddy terrain in the dark and the weather was harsh. When later Jean picked up the same prayer on her way back home through the darkness, deserted streets, sleet and rain, the reader now recognises that she was referring to her husband: for her and her husband to be good to each other. The reader eventually realises that what the woman was doing out there in the dark had something to do with their marital life, which was falling apart, and the couple's life situation, which had ground to a halt in a little bed-sit flat without room or anything else. The reader notes that Jean confronts the full force of their situation while the man does nothing about it. She says

Well, Brian is the one who is in the flat and he is kind of comfortable, and he is trying to be warm, the fire and things. And Jean is out there in the wilderness and battered by the weather, walking around. And it is kind of she wants to feel the weather and reality, really. And she is walking in the cemetery; she is kind of morbid. You get the image of a woman wandering around in her... It is really kind of tragic image and Jean has been tossed around, battered. And Brian's kind of avoided all that. He's kind of stayed in the flat really. Doesn't want to leave or sustain any hurt.

Part of Jean's struggle against the situation they face in life relates to her affair with the man in the car. After struggling with the morality of the behaviour for a while, Karin comes to the understanding that it was part of the woman's selflessness, her natural urge to confront life and to put herself on the line to save her husband.

And so it is like her body being kind of being used. But she is doing it for the good of Brian's sake, just in the hope that God will come and save her in a way. And things are going to change and she kind of wants to be free. She is just sacrificing everything for this little bit of hope there is... And Jean is desperate to keep her job in a way. But then she neglects to take the guy's offer of a pay rise. Maybe more will be expected of her and maybe she will get more badly exposed. Maybe she is quite all right with doing an occasional favour and she doesn't even want Brian to know because that will upset him the more. She is not doing it to get anything for herself. She is doing it to keep her job.

Karin's attitude towards Jean's sacrifice of herself is quite ambivalent. She first expresses the liberated view that Jean belittles herself in letting things loose and that she was easy with the boss in allowing her body to be used. But then she reverts to the patriarchal view by expressing admiration for Jean playing the *Alcestis* role by giving everything to Brian, giving up her body to keep her job. Proceeding from this other frame, the reader shifts her position on the value of what Jean did and says she could have chosen the easy way: kill herself. But she decided to live because of Brian, which is a more difficult option. The reader's ambivalence or shifting positions are symptomatic of the contesting liberated and patriarchal value systems and presuppositions operating in turns within and pulling her in different directions. In her construction of the figured world (Skinner et al 2001) of the narrative, the reader authors herself by assuming different cultural and personal positions. Her identity therefore becomes multiple, shifting and subject to a multiplicity of voices.

In an analysis of reader identity, it is sometimes possible to have a view of the personal histories of the reader when they feel called upon to lay their personal narratives side-by-side with the textual narratives. Some of the readers in the present study did that, but what Karin did was to use her own beliefs, values and inclinations to create different kinds of narratives for fictional characters. These allowed us to obtain certain views of her personal identities. We cannot however be sure whether she is religious or not; but it has been found that she never sources religious dogma or tenet to legitimise the values she holds or attitudes she affirms or refuses to affirm in the fictional character. What we know however is that she uses humanistic and sometimes, feminist values and discursive framework to legitimise the stands she takes and to enunciate the positions she adopts. But she now and then shifts towards patriarchal positions. We also cannot be sure of her sexual orientation; but she is someone who appreciated the strong bond between Auntie Araba and Mansa so

much so that she thought Mansa preferred living on with Araba to getting married to her son, Ato. Evidently Karin is very literate and she is passionate in her beliefs in personal human liberty and preference for idyllic communal lifestyles normally celebrated by the romantics.

The qualitative analysis has served its basic purpose of corroborating the findings of the quantitative analysis. But it has gone further. It has allowed us to have a view of the kinds of fictional situations and characters the readers constructed and how those constructions differed structurally between the groups. The adaptation of Giorgi's phenomenological procedures was effective in providing access to readers' discursive practices, the internal structures of their representations and how they positioned themselves in relation to their representations. The qualitative analysis of one reader's responses shifted the focus from a study of nomothetic representations to a study of ideographic representations, which allowed a view into how the individual reader may get into a pragmatic relation with textual material and how they may implicate themselves in the way that demonstrate affiliation and difference. Readers reproduce themselves by using textual information only as catalysts to create specific identities for themselves.

Conclusion

The quantitative analysis allowed the use of familiar statistical procedures to isolate representational features that distinguished one group of readers from another. The qualitative analysis was a validation of the findings of the quantitative analysis, but also allowed insight into readers' pragmatic relation to texts and forms of self-creation that go with narrative comprehension. The differences between the groups has become obvious: The Ghanaians are more likely to be concerned with ordinary issues of public life while the British students are interested in the inner lives of characters and are more likely to probe characters' unuttered motives, intentions, investigate their internal conflicts and struggles and shift positions with regard to characters' moral problems. It seems that readers from the two groups see quite different things in the texts they read. While for the Ghanaians the stories offered

opportunities for them to tell another story of how people normally live their lives in community, for the British students, these were occasions to yet again isolate for strict analysis some of the threats to the human being's individuality and integrity. However the differences are not always distinct since the British readers sometimes take up social issues, and can actually be ahead of the Ghanaians in analysing some of cleavages and conflicts in society.

It may be concluded therefore that the Ghanaians, more than the British students were quite limited in their explorations of the issues that the text may have raised. The complexities of literary signification may be uncovered only after sustained engagement with it and a willingness to look at the text from several different perspectives.

The analysis of one reader's responses is a demonstration of the role of the reader's presuppositions and background assumptions in the literary process as a test case of the inferential system. Literature always has the openness to embrace what the reader brings along. Once readers are able of link their presuppositions to the underlying patterns of meaning suggested by the text, they can allow their imagination to lead them on. The surface features of the text only serve as the anchor which constrains the extent to which we can recreate ourselves during the literary process.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

I intended this inquiry to have been an interdisciplinary study between pragmatics and literary theory. It turned out that I needed conceptual frames and analytical paradigms from more than just the two disciplines. My two major concerns, presupposition and processing of literary texts, are undeniably grounded either in pragmatics or literary theory. Major issues relating to these concerns have to do with context, common ground, speaker intentions, hearer assumptions, background knowledge, information packaging, intertextuality, literariness and meaning making. It is the wide ranging nature of concerns that has led to the migration into other disciplines: cognitive psychology, cultural theory, discourse processing, and the empirical study of literature. In the interdisciplinary studies linking literature and some other subject that I am aware of there is almost always an attempt by the other discipline to take over literature. There has been no such attempt in this research. The position that has guided the investigation is that literature is a form of social communication and that literary scholarship can have a lot of common ground with pragmatics of communication. It is on this common ground that I have endeavoured to situate this inquiry. In this concluding chapter I intend looking back at the main features of the research, focus on the implications of the study and make suggestions for further research.

7.2. Summary of the main features of research

7.2.1. Research objectives and orientation

What drew me to this inquiry is the interest in the socio-cultural nature of literary interpretation. This interest, for me, implicated and intertwined language, literature

and society in the common pursuit of meaning. Specifically, the main objective of the study has been to investigate the role of cultural presuppositions and personal knowledge in the interpretation of literary texts.

There has been in this research a departure from the rationalistic formalisms of contemporary mainstream presupposition research, towards the existentialist study of real users of the language accessing their background knowledge, presuppositions and prior assumptions to make sense of literary discourse. The attempt in this study has been not to develop recursive rules by which the surface structure of sentences may be indexed to some underlying prior assumptions, but to track how the cultural backgrounds of readers combine with texts to implicate certain meanings which go beyond the surface structure of the text. This study can be said to have followed the pragmatic intuition about presupposition as information taken for granted by interlocutors to be in the common ground of communication.

The departure from essentialist paradigms has allowed me, in this study, to address the question of the function of presupposition not merely in artificially created sentence isolates, but in complete naturalistic discourses. In other words, I have, in this inquiry, tracked what background information discourse interpreters assume to be implicated not only by the sentences of a narrative text, but by the discourse as a whole. The concentration on presupposition as a pragmatic category has compelled attention to the original Morris (1938) idea of pragmatics as the effect of textual signals on the language user. This is what guided the position taken in this thesis with regard to the controversies in literary theory about the relative roles of the author, the text and the reader in the interpretation of texts. While the focus of this study is basically on the reader, there has been no attempt made to deny the prior existence of the text and its (or the author's) role in the determination of literary meaning. On the issue of literary interpretation, I have supported the proposition that even though a text can be given a multiplicity of interpretations, it is not the case that interpretation is free for all without any constraining effect of the text.

The distinctions pursued in this thesis have been based on the idea that literary

representation is hierarchical. I am referring to the linguistic, semantic and pragmatic levels of representation. I tried to account for determinacy and indeterminacy in literary communication in terms of this hierarchy. In literary representation, what is determinate is semantic; the pragmatic level of meaning is indeterminate. The semantic/pragmatic distinction supported in this thesis parallels Dozelel's (1998) intentional/extensional and Iser's (1978) first code/second code distinctions in literary representation. I have therefore tried to isolate differences between readers and groups of readers at the pragmatic level, where meaning is indeterminate, open, and likely to index personal and socio-cultural, rather than textual, repertoire of norms and schemes of knowledge.

Presupposition scholarship has always linked the notion to background assumptions, common ground, context, authorised interpretation and multiplicity of meanings. All of these concepts have been crucial to the discussion in this thesis. In addition to these, I have associated presupposition with pragmatic information packaging theories of given and new information, and also with the figure-ground *gestalt*. These, for me, are the textual strategies by which authors disclose their communicative intentions and constrain audience response. I have also linked presupposition to historical, cultural and intertextual norms, which are implicitly indexed to textual structure. These, as my analysis has shown, serve to conceal the author's intentions and render meaning intractable, shiftable and multiple. This inquiry was meant to use the pragmatic category of presupposition to investigate how cultural background exercises its effect on authors, texts and readers. The point is that the research was undertaken on the assumption that presupposition plays a crucial role in the determinacy and indeterminacy of texts. In other words, the analysis of how the literary text is able to disclose and, at the same time, conceal its meaning can very well be done by the analysis the role of presupposition in the determination of literary meaning.

7.2.2. Research activities

The departure from the essentialist paradigm implies, for me, a shift from the

Stylistics/Cognitive Poetics interdisciplinary study of the literary process. I have attempted to investigate meaning, not as it appears to the analyst, but as it appears to the ordinary reader of literary texts. To establish the effect of cultural presuppositions and personal experiences on the literary process, I designed this study to be a cross-cultural investigation. My subjects were Ghanaian and British first year undergraduate students in the humanities. I made the reader's personal response a central methodological concern. Control of reader response was minimal, and wherever possible completely avoided. Methodologically, this study forms part of the empirical study of literature. The use of verbal reports and unstructured interviews was to give readers the opportunity to express their own meanings and to respond to the texts as fully as they possibly could.

In the transcription, reduction and categorisation of readers' comprehension data, there was no attempt to impose any interpretive framework *a priori*. There was every effort made to ground the analytic framework in the data. The methodological uniqueness of this study is that the focus here is not only on pragmatic and cognitive activities readers deploy to make sense of texts but also on the fictional representations that result from those activities. In addition, I used a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative analytic procedures in the attempt to benefit from their respective merits of analytical precision in distinguishing degrees in categories of experience and of establishing distinctiveness between kinds of reader experiences. The study has tracked how readers use their presuppositions and background assumptions to fill in textual gaps, and interrogate textual material by deploying higher level intellectual processes. Also the study has focused on how cultural background becomes a factor in the construction of certain identities through readers' engagement with literary texts.

7.2.3. Conclusions from research findings

The analysis has provided evidence in support of the hypothesis that cultural backgrounds of both reader and text have significant effects on the construction of meaning. The results obtained give support to the view that both the text and the

reader are crucial for the determination of the meaning of a literary text. In spite of the significant effect of cultural presuppositions to the interpretation of literary texts, this study did not support the hypothesis that closeness to the cultural background of a text confers processing advantage to readers over those who are not so close to the background of the text. The fact that the British readers came out as more sensitive and more disposed to engage both the Ghanaian and Scottish texts at higher levels of representation than the Ghanaians, indicate that meaning making does not depend only on access to the structures of norms and systems of knowledge implicitly indexed by textual elements. The analysis has shown that mastery of a good range of processing strategies can sometimes override the disadvantage of cultural distance.

This study was primarily to investigate the reality sets of Ghanaian readers of literature in relation to readers from another cultural background. The results suggest that the Ghanaian subjects in the study were mythically oriented to the texts they read, in the sense that they mostly searched for familiar patterns within the texts and overlaid them with personal experiences and other narratives. The British readers in the study were more analytically oriented to the texts they read. This means that they were more likely to take their experience of the narrative text as an occasion to interrogate life, human nature and social reality. They are the ones more likely to read the texts critically, reason with it and make abstractions from it. The data analysis has therefore revealed two very different groups of readers. In terms of Vipond and Hunt (1984), while the Ghanaians' interpretive activities can be described as story or information driven, the British students were generally engaged in point-driven reading activities.

These distinctions seem to address the pedagogical situation in the Ghanaian literature classroom; that teachers find it difficult to get their students make the kind of progress expected from them. The analysis has showed that the Ghanaians lack the range of processing skills which made their British counterparts dynamic and innovative makers of meaning. As part of the main effects of analysis, the differences between the Ghanaian and British readers are culturally implicated, i.e. the processes of socialisation have left the Ghanaians (compared with their British

counterparts) less able to deploy most of the higher level intellectual processes which are required for satisfactory reading of literary texts. Beyond this point it is difficult to say why the groups came out so differently. One can resort to nothing other than mere speculation. There is the need to find out what exactly has gone into their respective socialisation processes to make them come out so differently.

It is clear that the Ghanaian readers, in contrast with the British readers, have been brought up in a dominantly oral culture. The characteristic features of orality: brevity, simplicity and the schematic nature of texts, may have a way of conditioning response to literature in general. Secondly it is the Ghanaian readers, and not the British, who were generally inducted into literature and literacy in a language other than their own native language. Watt (1991) and Lodge (1998) have made initial observations about the enormous amount of adaptations that the learner will have to make in order to process literature in a second language. Thirdly, the status of Ghana as an underdeveloped economy may be playing a part. The point is that educational institutions in the country may be struggling to maintain adequate resources for learners. Krashen (2004) and Morrell (2002) have spoken about the detrimental effects of poorly resourced learning environments on the acquisition of literacy skills. The fact that literary proficiency is contingent upon the mastery of higher level literacy skills should put Ghanaian readers at a much weaker position in relation to British readers. None of these propositions has been researched; no one can tell at the moment the extent to which they participate in the socialisation processes and how much effect they have on the cognitive orientation of the Ghanaian learner to literary texts. There may be other cultural factors involved. Consideration may be given to, for instance, the extent to which young people are allowed to speak up in public, and how the education system prepares them to confront new situations, to deal with new challenges and to create new knowledge.

In this inquiry, presupposition has been identified as the linguistic form which links textual structure to bits of culture, i.e. parts of shared community experience, beliefs, myths and forms of meaning. Presupposition has emerged from the analysis as the text that encodes other texts, links current text to anterior texts, and makes current

text acquire meaning only in terms of previous texts. Presupposition, as taken for granted meaning, goes deep into the soul and identity of the user of the language; for it is not just every user of the language who can access specific meanings that certain users have overlaid on words they have used; bits of shared experience which they implicitly index to textual structure. Presupposition therefore has a way of disclosing meaning only to an in-group, while concealing it from others outside the limits of the group.

While the research provides evidence which supports the belief in cultural effects on literary reading, it does not lead to the denial of individual differences in literary meaning. The analysis has led to the identification of variability of comprehension within groups. The focus on one reader's responses to the texts has shown the extent to which an individual may generally project an identity quite different from any other within the group. This conclusion is not meant to undermine the hypothesis on the social and public nature of reading, i.e. the idea of interpretive communities. There is always a tension between individualist (subjective) and socio-cultural (intersubjective) basis of meaning making. While this study is not really an investigation of how such tensions are reconciled, it may be noted from the analysis that variations in individual responses may converge more easily into family resemblances when subjects were from the same cultural background than when they were not from the same background.

7.3. Implications of research

This study was primarily undertaken with the view to ascertaining the effect of readers' cultural knowledge and personal experience on the interpretation of literary texts, and assessing its implications on classroom practice, literacy and education in general. As I indicated in the introductory chapter of this thesis, I have come from a background where teachers have all but given up on obtaining rewarding effects from the teaching of literature. My own experience confirms the suggestion by Miall (1996) that literature classes do not exert positive influences on students' experiences of literature and that there is need for a better grasp of theoretical issues involved in

literary response in the profession. It is true, as Miall says, that in most cases students are involved in a complex guessing game in which they have to discover what the meaning of the text in the teacher's mind might be. But I do not agree with Miall when he argues, following Northrop Frye (1970), that literature cannot be taught. What I do believe is that classroom practice should change with respect to the attitude towards meaning, knowledge and authority. My discussion of the implications of this study for literary pedagogy will centre on this belief and on its consequences for classroom practice and power relations between teachers and pupils, the classroom as a learning environment, and how all these fit in with literacy and education.

7.3.1. Meaning making, learner background and literary pedagogy

The multiplicity of meanings generated by subjects, even among those who share common cultural backgrounds definitely undermines the idea of a single overall valid textual interpretation. Teachers of literature have the habit of pursuing what they consider to be "true" meaning of the text (Cole & Hall 2001), which they assume can be arrived at by putting the class through processes of meaning elicitation. Literary pedagogues should understand that textual meaning cannot be *objectively* mapped onto any individual's brain. The search for objective meaning and knowledge in the literature class however will always be a pursuit of despair.

The foregoing notwithstanding, there is no claim being made here that meaning making is a free for all kind of activity. Even the constructivist idea of meaning (e.g. von Glasersfeld 1989; Doolittle and Gamp 1999) requires it to be viable within the agent's tradition of thought and language, that is, in terms of textual evidence and reasoning procedures that are normal in the interpretive community. The literature class should aim at this kind of viability. The pragmatic/dialogic idea of literary communication presupposes certain participants involved in this kind of interaction. The reading process should be an empathetic effort through which the reader endeavours to recover the communicative intentions of the author. The literary

classroom should aim at constituting the learner into something like Iser's (1974; 1978) Implied Reader, who fulfils the functions marked out for her/him by the structural features of the text.

The results of the analysis underline the crucial nature of access to the cultural and literary norms and systems of knowledge which the structure of the text presupposes. Hirsch (2003) has observed that knowledge of words speeds up reading, but knowledge of the world speeds up comprehension. This research has demonstrated how readers use their presuppositions to fill-in gaps of information, to question fictional behaviour and to support processes of thinking about the text through generalisations and abstractions, which enable them to relate the particular text to social reality. Hirsch argues that prior knowledge frees the reader to make connections between new material and previously learned material and allows the reader to ponder on implications.

Doolittle and Gamp (*ibid*) point out that the construction of meaning and knowledge involves meaning manipulation and self organisation of experience, and requires that students regulate their own cognitive functions, mediate new meanings from existing knowledge and form awareness of current knowledge structures. In traditional schema studies of second language acquisition (e.g. Carrell 1987; 1988; 1992; Carrell & Eisterhood 1983) teachers are encouraged to provide students with the background knowledge required for understanding the text. Literature teachers also need to fill in any gaps of cultural and literary knowledge that may be obtaining between learners and the texts that they have to read. Sell (2001b) has spoken of the need for the critic to maintain communication parity between the writer and the reader. This becomes more urgent when the socio-cultural gap between the context of writing and the current context of reading gets wider in terms of space and time. The literary pedagogue may find it enormously beneficial to perform the role which Sell allocates to the literary critic.

Taking a stand that is in contradistinction to the decentring positioning of structuralists and poststructuralists, and the determinism of historicism, Sell argues

that literary pragmatics will have to take a sharp focus on socio-cultural differentiation. He notes that socio-cultural disparities between the context of writing and the current context of reading will be seen both as an obstacle and a stimulus to communication. According to Sell, in presenting any given writer to any given readership, the critic will have to start explicitly, or implicitly, from cross-cultural analysis. The mediating critic will have to offer readers assistance – literary, historical, biographical, philological – in their efforts to empathise with the writer's difference from themselves. The point about mediating criticism is that readers will ultimately respond to the text from the depth of their own subjectivities, that is, what they know and how they feel. Mediation amounts to equipping readers to engage the author without overriding or ignoring the other's subjectivities.

Mediating between the reader and the author does not mean the teacher has to supplant the individuality of the learner. Sell cautions that the critic should not pretend to have the last word. The teacher's role amounts to extending for the learner, what Murray (1993) calls "domains of explanation," out of which they can explain the text. Teachers are not to assume that the effect of their mediation will result in the adoption of their own domains of explanation by their pupils. Teachers need to recognise the validity of other domains of explanation and seek to understand student's answers by asking in what domain their explanations will make sense. According to Murray this may entail researching the social and cultural backgrounds of students and developing a great awareness of their different histories. The teacher as a mediator should not only bring into accessibility the historicity of the text, but also, as Murray thinks it imperative, s/he should help students to make connections to their own histories. The pragmatics of literary interpretation requires that all participants of the interaction be well defined and represented.

One major effect of the recognition of reading as a dialogic exchange is that teachers will have to cede a degree of authority over the text to pupils (Coles & Hall 2001). To help students develop reader autonomy, teachers should recognise the merits of discovery approaches of learning, and allow their pupils to discover things for themselves. This, however, does not imply that in the classroom learners should

completely be left to themselves. Cobb (1999) calls for some kind of scaffolding. The teacher needs to give examples, motivate, discuss, facilitate, support, challenge, while not attempting to be the conduit of knowledge (Doolittle and Gamp 1999). If teachers have this attitude they will understand that meaning is never a ready made commodity but comes about as the product of the readers' active engagement with the meaning making process. Shor (1992) calls on teachers to use their authority to promote rather than silence student agency. She distinguishes classroom discourses into two types: a monolithic discourse which sets the agenda from the top-down and a dialogic discourse which sets the agenda from bottom-up. Promoting student agency amounts to implementing a dialogic discourse in the classroom. Teacher authority should not contradict dialogue, i.e. the dialogue between learners and the text on the one hand, and the dialogue between the individual learner and everyone else in the classroom on the other hand.

Teachers retreating from their traditional roles of imparting universal truths about texts will require that they transform the classroom into an environment where learners come to construct understanding through interaction in community. Even though the individual construction of meaning has been underlined in this research, there is an obvious recognition given to role of the community in the learning process since readers who share similar backgrounds tend to interpret texts in more similar ways than those who do not. Botella (2003) talks about constructivism in terms of considering the relation between people and the environment as a dialectical one in which parts are modified by mutual reciprocal action. It is this kind of environment that it is the duty of teachers to transform their classrooms into. The fact about our presuppositions creating for us contexts of interpretations is that significant others become part of our contexts and we also merge into the contexts of others.

Murray (1993) talks about "the nervous systems as expanding their realm of possible behaviours by coupling, which occurs only by living together." That is, individuals in each other's context will initiate in the other structural changes through their history of recurrent interactions (structural couplings). These changes will constitute

knowledge/meaning. The classroom context includes the teacher and all the other pupils; and the idea of overlapping contexts will function best if the interpersonal nature of knowledge is understood. Different personal histories initiate dynamics of interaction, concurrent action and congruent change, or else separation. According to Murray, two people who become congruent may be able to find a third culture. The idea of significant others like teachers (and student colleagues) having effects on learning and meaning making is not unlike the Vygotskian (1978) idea of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Such zones exist when a less developed individual/student interacts with a more advanced person/teacher, allowing the student to achieve things they otherwise would not have achieved. The more developed pulls the less developed forward.

7.3.2. Processing strategies and literary education

Even though this research confirms that the reader's presuppositions are vital to their understanding of texts, prior knowledge alone does not ensure that readers will construct complex mental representations. They need the processing skills that will relate their background knowledge to the current text in a more engaging way that will generate higher levels of meaning. It is readers' processing skills more than their mental store of personal and cultural knowledge that addresses directly the question of teachability of literature. The cognitive science idea of literary processing, which is characterised as occurring in the form of subconscious brain processes, and which is assumed to be a universal inheritance of the human species, project literature as unteachable. In fact Miall (1996) argues that

Responding to literature can be seen as part of the adaptive system which humans have so far rather successfully devised to sustain themselves. One might wonder in conclusion, given our disposition in childhood to generate elementary forms of literature, why require literary education at all? Would this capacity simply not continue to develop and mature left to itself, enabling all of us to enjoy Shakespeare, Wordsworth and James Joyce as adults? . . . Now we have to facilitate or induce by educational means responsiveness to literature that in a different culture would need no such aid.

But the view argued in this thesis, which the empirical study supports, is that literary expertise is unevenly distributed among human communities, and even within

particular communities, among individuals. The analysis of comprehension processes in this research confirms the existence of such differences among groups and individuals. I believe that the debate about teachability of literature ultimately has something to do with the theory of meaning. If textual meaning is simply evoked, as some cognitive scientists (e.g. Simon 1995) claim it is, then there is no point trying to teach literature. But this study has argued the position that meaning, in literary processing, is not so much as passively evoked or retrieved as it is actively constructed. I am in support of Durant (2001) when he argues that it is more accurate to describe discourse meaning not as something narrowly comprehended but as something ascribed in a way that approximates to a greater or lesser extent to what the writer or speaker anticipated. The implication of the conclusions arrived at in this thesis with regard to meaning construction and the teachability of literature is that teaching and learning of processing strategies should form a significant part of literary education.

Durant (*ibid*) has observed the general absence of transfer of insights about psychological dimensions of utterance interpretation into the literature classroom. He notes that the literary reading is commonly taught by means of guided work on a fairly small amount of prescribed texts, rather than by encouragement of broad interpretive skills and processing strategies. There is need for students to be actively helped to exploit general psychological abilities in support of their linguistic competence. Durant believes that interpretive approaches acquired by means of task based approaches can be applied to tasks other than those directly studied.

This study has led to the identification of specific processing strategies which readers adopt to construct representations for texts. We can now refer to the many other studies in the field (e.g. Palincsar & Brown 1984; Brown et al 1996; Pressley et al 1989; Pressley et al 1992) that have investigated comprehension processes from different perspectives, and provide specific pedagogical frameworks by which the teaching of literary processing could be handled in the classroom situation.

Palincsar & Brown (1984)³¹ for instance propose their framework of Reciprocal Teaching (RT), which deals with the teaching of comprehension fostering and comprehension monitoring strategies. The gist of the RT-method is that students acquire these strategies during teacher-guided practice in small groups (of six pupils) taking the format of a dialogue where the teacher and the students take turns leading the discussions while applying the strategies to the pertinent features of the text. Initially the teacher leads the discussion and models how a strategy operates and has to be used; but progressively – as their mastery of strategies increases students take over the responsibility of applying them, while the teacher provides the feedback, coaching and scaffolding as far as is necessary. In other words, from the theoretical perspective the major characteristics of reciprocal teaching are (i) the social mediation of strategy consistent with Vygotskian theory (Vygotsky 1978) and (ii) the gradual shift from external regulation to self regulation of strategy use by the students.

The underlying assumption of such comprehension strategy teaching frameworks is that cognitive and metacognitive strategies for reading comprehension are learnable and teachable (de Corte et al 2001). The objective of such teaching procedures is generally to bring readers to awareness of the cognitive and metacognitive processes they mobilise when interpreting texts, with the view of enabling the reader to exercise control over such processes. Hanauer (1999) has developed a model based on Bialystok's (1990; 1994) theories of language learning, in which he discusses the role of awareness and attention in developing the individual's ability to detect and internalise specific information from literary texts. Awareness is seen in the model in terms of the processes of analysis and the processes of control. According to Hanauer these processes direct the change in the reader's internal representation of knowledge. Through the processes of analysis the readers' internal representation and the processes leading to the internal representation change from being implicit into becoming explicit. The process of control involves a development in the learner's ability to selectively focus on the relevant and appropriate information. Control in this sense is the process of allocating attention to specific representations

³¹ The representation of their framework made here is sourced from de Corte et al (2001).

of knowledge and the ability to move between representations of knowledge in the manner which ensures fluent completion of the task at hand. The development of knowledge as a result of these processes manifests itself in the learner's increasing ability.

de Corte et al (2001) identify four comprehension strategies: activating prior knowledge, clarifying difficult words, making a schematic representation of the text and formulating the main idea, and a metacognitive strategy of regulating one's own reading process, whose development in the learner, they believe, is vital to the improvement of interpretive ability. What is lacking in this list of strategies is the idea of the multi-level nature of literary processing. This study has led to the identification of a hierarchy of processing strategies that readers use to make sense of texts. The importance of such a hierarchy is that it shows not only how readers decode the linguistic meaning of the text, that is, "what is said", but also how they go beyond what is said to construct "what is meant" by the text. This is the distinction between primary and secondary level processes on one hand, and tertiary level processes on the other. Tertiary processes enable readers to access background assumptions, prior knowledge and presuppositions, and bring them to bear on the text. They are thus able to interrogate the text, use it as a point of reference in thinking about life, about social reality and about human nature. But it should be emphasised that the lower level processes are also very important since the semantic representation of a text is prior to and presupposed by a tertiary representation.

Teaching for the acquisition of processing strategies may be structured into the following six phases of increasing complexity: (a) decoding conventions, (b) establishing comprehension, (c) realising the context (d) developing interpretation (e) integrating for synthesis, and (f) critiquing for evaluation. These processing strategies range from such basic skills as decoding writing conventions of sentence structure and literary genre, through summarisation, paraphrasing and relating the text to social factors, to challenging the ideas of the author by noting bias, distortion, and/ or lack of coherence. It may be noted that point (a) above corresponds with the primary level processes identified in this study; point (b) with secondary level

processes; and points (c) to (f) relate to the tertiary processes. The teaching of these skills needs to be well structured and implemented in the literary class on incremental basis, i.e. $(a) \rightarrow ((a) + (b)) \rightarrow ((a) + (b) + (c))$, etc.

It is important that students are taught metacognitive skills as well. In this thesis they are referred to as monitoring processes. Doolittle and Gamp (1999) note that metacognition is an essential aspect of learning. By this process readers keep track of textual information, assess the effectiveness of the strategies they are using to evaluate the level of their understanding or the limitations in the level of knowledge available to them.

The implications of this inquiry for literary pedagogy relate to the autonomy of the reader as a constituent of the reading process. The significance of the reader is that s/he encapsulates the intermediary stage between stimulus and response: the stage of mental states and processes. In the classroom, the integrity of the student's mental state as the embodiment of their personal histories and individual presuppositions should be duly recognised. The multiplicity of interpretations that will be engendered in the classroom should be welcomed rather than avoided. However, the cultural environment of interaction in the classroom will inevitably lead to overlapping individual contexts of interpretation during which each member of the class is likely to become part of the personal history of other members and participate in mutual meaning making activities. Also, it is clear that the mental processes required for the student to fully access their prior knowledge and presuppositions are learnable processes which must feature strongly in literary education.

7.3.3. Literacy and education

The inquiry also has implications for our understanding of the role of literary education in the development of literacy in particular and of education in general. The post-modern idea about meaning is that it is always provisional and floating. The ever changing domains of explanations and different ontogenies that determine

meaning representation should predispose students to a world in which multiplicity of meaning is the norm rather than there being just one meaning however powerful (Coles and Hall 2001). Students of literature should be able to make sense of and navigate through several forms of information. As Coles & Hall indicate the post-modern world is a questioning one; and literary education should provide the facility for generating alternative discourses, different ways of thinking that can be appropriated for critical examination of the world of ideas. Literary education can play a key role in literacy programmes, which according to Vendramin (2002) helps us to become aware of stereotypes that govern our lives, how to go beyond perspectives and points of view taken for granted, i.e. our presuppositions.

The system of education which literary education, as envisaged in this thesis, can harmonise with, opposes the kind of education that Paulo Freire (1973) calls “banking education”. Freire defines banking education in terms of the kind of education which locates knowledge solely in the educator and the institution, which denies the interaction and reconstruction of knowledge in the interpretation and use of texts. While not obliged to endorse Freire’s Marxist analysis of truth and social purpose of literacy, one cannot afford not to take note of his invitation to people to “read the word and the world”. The idea is for education to develop in students that critical consciousness which can enable them to question the myths that circumscribe their lives. The study of presupposition and the processing of literary texts gives us an idea of how the world gets encoded in the word, made implicit, the topic, the theme, the point of reference, the ground which frames our discourse and thereby assuming for it the quality of truth by being put beyond the limit of debate. This is what literary education should make students aware of and able to interrogate.

7.4. Limitations of research

I decided to undertake this research intending to investigate the extent to which readers’ cultural knowledge and personal experiences influence their interpretive activities. In so doing I hoped also to find out whether readers’ proximity to the cultural background of the text gave them processing advantage over those who were

distant from that background. The investigation has yielded some results and conclusions which I have just summarised. Now is the moment to face up to the issue of limitations of the results of the research. The issue of research limitations may be addressed in terms of the notions of (i) validity - the degree to which our observations reflect the phenomena of interest, (ii) reliability - consistency of the research findings, and (iii) generalisability - the fit of research case and what takes place more broadly in society. Issues of validity and reliability have now and then been related to data collection, simplification, classification and analysis. I avoided control of subjects' responses, and analytical instruments and procedures were developed in response to the internal patterns manifest in the data itself. The combination of quantitative and qualitative procedures in the analysis was an attempt to use one procedure to validate the other. I suppose however that there is the need to say something more about the issue of generalisability of the research findings.

There is a certain kind of ambivalence over the issue of generalisability of the research findings in view of the fact that in spite of the quantification of parts of the analysis, this investigation is basically a qualitative research. The objective has been to access the subjective responses of the individual reader to the suggestions of the textual stimulus. However the analytical procedures have uncovered the recurrence of patterns of meanings and processing strategies within the data. We have actually been able to find evidence of characteristic patterns of thought relative to the cultural background of the reader. I assume that questions of generalisability relate to two issues: (i) whether the findings relating the use of presuppositions in literary process reflects interpretive activity in general, and (ii) whether the distinctions made between Ghanaian and British students are applicable to readers from the respective backgrounds in general. My direct answer to the first question is in the affirmative. Readers who share the kinds of cultural and educational background of the participants in this study are very likely to use their cultural knowledge and personal experience in much the same way as has been observed in this research, i.e. use knowledge to fill in gaps of information, make elaborations on textual information, interrogate the text, and take stances relative to the text. Readers are generally likely to implicate themselves by accessing what they know, talking about what they

believe and exposing how they feel. With regard to the second question there is the need for a more extended response.

What is problematic in the present research in relation to generalisability in the second instance indicated above has to do with the sample size. I used data from twenty readers, ten from each group. The question is whether findings from such a limited sample size can be applied to the general population. This question relates to the question of applicability of the case study. Kvale (1996: 232-5) reviews a number of studies (e.g. Kennedy 1979) which argue for establishing rules for drawing inferences about the generality of qualitative findings. The validity of generalisation hinges on the extent to which the attributes compared are relevant, which again depends on rich, dense, thick descriptions of the case. In spite of the limited size of the sample, these conditions are met in this research. Since readers' descriptions were purely subjective it is difficult to claim that others from the broader society may generate the same kind of images and descriptions. What may be generalisable are the processing strategies the readers used, the processing versatility of the British readers and difficulties the Ghanaians faced with regard to unfamiliar information.

7.5. Conclusion: Theoretical significance and areas for further research

In the discussion section of her paper, "Verbal data on literary understanding," Andringa (1990) raised a number of issues some of which I find useful to relate to in the final comments of this thesis. She noted that two values are demanded of qualitative research: (i) that the material should have some self-evidencing relevance in the field, and (ii) they should have some theoretical implications filling some slots in existing theories or adding new aspects which could be explored further.

One self-evidencing interest in the material used in this research could be that it shows how readers relate to texts from their own cultural backgrounds and to texts

from another cultural background. This study has focused on the processing advantages and limitations to readers in either case. It has drawn attention to conditions under which readers can overcome the limitations imposed on them by having to read texts from a culture other than their own. Another self-evidencing interest might be in the study of different groups of readers who seem to represent cultures with particularly different orientations to literacy. It seems to me that readers from a predominantly oral culture seek to process narrative texts from a mythical point of view, i.e. seeing the narrative as an opportunity for them to tell another narrative, by means of elaborations, descriptions and juxtapositions of their own life story against the textual narrative. Readers from a dominantly scribal culture see the narrative from an analytical point of view, as occasion to take life and social reality apart, interrogate ideological positions and seek an understanding of human nature in general.

On Andringa's second point, this study, in undertaking an interdisciplinary study of presupposition and the processing of literary texts, has approached the study of both presupposition and literary processing from a perspective which is different from standard analytic paradigms. Presupposition has been studied as it occurs in normal usage – as an implicit encoding of information, as information management device, as a means of putting ideas beyond the limits of debate, as knowledge structure which frames interpretation of texts, as the encoding of bits of culture and past meanings in a new text. Literary processing has been studied from the pragmatic point of view, rather than from a cognitive point of view. This has drawn attention to the constituents of literary discourse: the textual stimulus, the intermediate stages of reader internal states and processes and the resulting representations of meaning. The net effects of these are (i) appreciation of the possibility of multiplicity of meanings, (ii) recognition of the integrity and autonomy of the reader, (iii) awareness of the part played by the community in the construction of meaning, (iv) insight into the role of processing strategies in the interpretation of texts.

The research concerns and findings of this research should primarily attract more research attention to the socialisation processes of the Ghanaian learner, and to how

issues like orality, literary induction in a second language, standards of learning resources available in the classroom, the dynamics of power and authority in the literature classroom, impact literacy acquisition, development of learner autonomy, and literary proficiency. It should be possible to do longitudinal studies on students and measure their progress at each level on the academic ladder. Across the country (Ghana), it should be possible to do interschool studies, or cross-regional studies to distinguish any variations there might be. The objective may be to find out the extent to which classrooms become the open environment where pupils freely test new ideas and use literary texts to interrogate the circumstances under which they live their lives and to question the beliefs and prejudices that define social reality as they know it.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Instructions to participants

You are invited to participate in a research which is focused on the ways in which people different people interpret the same text. The assumption we are making in this study is that literary texts can have many different interpretations and that no single individual can claim to have the only correct interpretation of any text. You are therefore invited to read these stories and do all you can to make your interpretation as best as you can.

The procedure is that you give your interpretation just as you read; you verbalise, that is, speak aloud all the thoughts that come to your mind at the moment when you are reading the text. You do not have to imagine how some other person may make of what you are reading. What is important for us is your own meaning, not someone else's meaning. It may be the case that some of the things presented in the text will remind you of some other things: something you may have experienced yourself, told you by others or something you read somewhere some time ago. You might find some of the things presented in the story quite pleasant, or unpleasant, interesting, or rather boring.

The idea is for you to speak aloud all the impressions, feelings, ideas, and memories that come into your mind as you read the text. You are like someone observing different things at the same time; some of those things, you may realise, are going on in the text, or that they are going on in your mind. Just describe or explain them as you read the text. We want to know how you understand the text; even if there are portions that you find difficult to understand, you have to say it; talk about the problems of understanding that you are facing.

You may take in the text bit by bit, and give your response at the time when you read. Do not try to make your verbalisations systematic; only make sure you speak out every thought that comes into your mind. There are some reading questions on the left side of the page which can help you with your responses. Give answers to those questions if you think that they are necessary to the way you understand the text. You may turn to the next page only when you feel satisfied with the completeness of the response you have made to the text on the particular page you are dealing with.

Appendix 2: Sample reader's protocol data for "Dedacus"

The small woman

So she is quite short. I get the image of somebody who is quiet small, but young, attractive.

walks below the weather

Below the weather. Maybe because she is small, she gets protected, she get sheltered by the buildings, the tombs and the church, all the bus stops and everything. She walks below the weather. She isn't bothered anymore. She doesn't feel the weather. It is raining or it is sleeting or snowing.

Oh she

feels the chill of the slurry underfoot

So she feels what is on the ground. But she doesn't know what is going on up and around herself. She just sees the consequences of the weather. Slurry. Slurry is the word I use when people who can't talk properly and they are drunk.

Maybe it is slushy and slippery and also making the walk down hill from the graveyard more dangerous, more muddy

She wants to be back with her husband

So Brian is obviously her husband and she wants to be back with him. She wants to feel safe with him. I get the image of a man sat alone in the flat, waiting for her with the telly on, with a lot of fire, a fake fire on, but at least warm and protected. But he doesn't know what is going on I think.

and this will make her late.

I guess it is about ten o'clock, eleven o'clock now. And he is waiting for her. Or maybe it is earlier. And he is waiting for her to cook his dinner or something. He is wondering whether she is concerned about him as well.

Please God let us be good for each other.

So she still wanting to talk to God, still feels he is the only one she can talk to. So maybe she is alone. She hasn't many friends. Let us be good for each other. I think let us be good for each other. That is not the future; the present, not the future tense. So maybe they just got married and she is hoping that it is going to last. She hoping that finally there is going to be some stability and safety and life and good for each other. Then she is going to be good for him as well. She is not going to let him down. He alone will be there for her or maybe her husband himself has had a rough time. Maybe he hasn't got a job and he is waiting for her. He hasn't got out maybe. That is why they are in financial problems.

Jean has a photograph of Brian

Maybe it is in her wallet that she keeps of him when they were happier and younger. I imagine a passport photo of him smiling or a photo of him with friends. An old one

She keeps it in her handbag. But she knows it off by heart.

So she always takes the photo out and looks at it. She got a big handbag full of clutter. But one thing, I think, one thing that she reaches for is the photo of Brian. So I think he is quite like a rock for her. He is quite strong but I think he used to be. Maybe she is living with how he used to be in the past, because she knows it off by heart. She used to look at it a lot I think she loves him because she is always... he represents security and something happy in her life. But I don't think she has much in her life. Her handbag I imagine a big brown handbag. It is worn, got a lot of stuff in it. A lot of useless stuff in it: pens, old lipsticks, tissues. A big one that goes over the shoulder. She doesn't strike me as well organised.

It was taken in the first year they met.

So I think they met quite a long time ago. I imagine they met, maybe in a wedding. I just keep imagining my father. My parents met in a wedding. The first year they met. I think they were happy when they met

He stands in his overalls

So he used to be a kind of mechanic, I think, or a technician of some kind.

both hands in his pockets. He smiles in an angle and his weight on one leg.

Appendix 3: Sample Interview data for “Dedacus”

INTERVIEWER . WHEN WE LOOK AT THE SMALL PEOPLE WE HAVE IN FOCUS JEAN AND MAYBE HER HUSBAND BRIAN. LET'S TALK ABOUT JEAN FIRST. HOW DOES SHE STRIKE YOU AS A WOMAN, AS A WIFE, AS A WORKER, WHATEVER. AS A HUMAN BEING. HOW DOES SHE STRIKE YOU?

ANDY IT SEEMS THAT SHE IS A HUMAN BEING OF GREAT WORTH AND GREAT VALUE THAT IS FORCED INTO A SITUATION WHICH SHE CAN'T HELP. EVEN THOUGH PEOPLE WOULD SAY WHAT SHE IS DOING THIS WITH THIS GUY, IT IS SHAMEFUL, BUT SHE HAS TO AND SHE HAS TO COME TO TERMS WITH THAT. AND SHE IS PRAYING TO GOD. AND SHE IS OPEN-MINDED AND SHE IS TRYING HER BEST FOR HER HUSBAND AS WELL. SHE JUST SEEMS UNABLE TO COPE WITH LIFE BUT SHE STILL STRUGGLES ON, STRONG.

INTERVIEWER . WHEN YOU SAY SHE CANNOT COPE WITH LIFE WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU SAY THAT SHE CANNOT COPE WITH LIFE?

ANDY . SHE IS JUST, WHEN SHE WAS IN THE GRAVEYARD SHE SAYS SHE WANTS SOMEWHERE DARK, SOMEWHERE NO ONE CAN TOUCH HER. SHE IS AS COPING ON THE SURFACE BUT DEEP DOWN, AND THE LAST SENTENCE THEY HOPE FOR THIS FREEDOM. SHE IS NOT FREE; SHE IS NOT FREE. IT IS LIKE A PADDED CELL. SHE IS JUST REFLECTING ON HER LIFE.

INTERVIEWER . ARE THERE OTHER PARTICULARS APART FROM THE FACT THAT SHE LIVES IN A SMALL PLACE THAT MAKES US FEEL SHE IS NOT FREE

ANDY . SHE IS BOUND BY THIS GUY AND OBVIOUSLY CONTROLLED BY HIM.

INTERVIEWER . NOW IN THE RELATIONSHIP OR WHATEVER, THE AFFAIR WITH THE MAN IN THE CAR. HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE IT AS FAR AS JEAN IS CONCERNED, FROM HER PERSPECTIVE?

ANDY . I AM TRYING FIND A GOOD ENOUGH WORD. IT IS COLD; IT IS DESPERATE.

INTERVIEWER . IT IS SOMETHING THAT SHE WOULD BETTER NOT DO, RIGHT?

ANDY RIGHT

INTERVIEWER *BUT THE MAN GAVE HER THE OPPORTUNITY TO OPT OUT IT*

ANDY *SHE CAN'T. SHE CAN'T DO THAT. SHE MUST DO SOMETHING TO PLEASE HIM AND SECURE THE CONSEQUENCES IF SHE DOESN'T. AND THE GUY KNOWS THAT AND HE JUST SAYS THAT TO MAKE HIMSELF FEEL BETTER. THAT OH, IT IS OKAY. HE WANTS TO TRICK HIMSELF; SHE WANTS THIS AS WELL. I MEAN...*

INTERVIEWER *WELL, YOU WERE SAYING THAT MAYBE SHE WAS DOING THIS FOR HER HUSBAND AS WELL.*

ANDY *YEAH.*

INTERVIEWER *WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?*

ANDY *WELL, IT SAYS, I WANT TO FIND THE SENTENCE THAT FEEDS MY HEAD. MAYBE THAT IS, BECAUSE OF WHAT SHE IS DOING THAT THEY WOULD BOTH BE FREE FINANCIALLY, OR YOU THAT IS WHAT SHE THINKS BUT I DOUBT IF THAT IS TRUE*

INTERVIEWER *. OKAY THERE IS A POINT WHERE SHE SAYS THAT THEY ARE NOT WITHOUT HOPE.*

ANDY *YEAH*

INTERVIEWER *. ERMM*

ANDY *. THEY, I THOUGHT THAT THEY REFERRED TO THE RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER BUT NOW...*

INTERVIEWER *MAYBE THEY REFERRED TO HER AND HER HUSBAND THEY ARE NOT WITHOUT HOPE*

THEY TOGETHER.

Appendix 4: Sample reader's protocol data for

“Something to talk about on the way to the funeral”

But my sister she really had a big blow when he put Mansa into trouble.

Ato put somebody's daughter into trouble.

It must have been very terrible for her because someone put her into trouble in the same way. That must have been something really bad

Mansa's father nearly killed her.

I guess I think someone put her in the family way, that is the only thing a young woman can do to merit a father's threat of murder

Mansa's father was a proud man. When school education came here all his children except Mansa were too old to go to school. And he used to boast he will only feel he has done his best by her when she reached the biggest college in the white man's land.

Mansa's father had big plans for Mansa, he even wanted to send her outside the country for school. Then he must have been very mad.

I say Mansa's father never let anyone sleep.

He must have been very mad

And so after the sixth month of Mansa's pregnancy

I predicted she got pregnant

her mother and Auntie Araba decided to do something about the situation.

Her father must have been giving everybody a tough time, threats, I guess.

Auntie Araba will take Mansa in see her through until the baby was born and then later they will think about what to do.

This is strange. Either Mansa didn't have a mother or the mother was angry too. But even if she was very angry I don't think she will have turned her out. But I think the father was too much.

So Auntie Araba took Mansa in.

So Mansa went to live with her. And from that moment people did not even know how to describe the relationship.

This is very rare. Most women feel that when their sons get other women's daughters pregnant, they feel that the girl should have known better, which is very wrong. But this is an exception to normal occurrences, which is commendable.

Some people said that they were like mother and daughter. Others they were like sisters. Still more others even said they were like friends

This was the best of relationship Auntie Araba could have had with Mansa, because I am sure she would have felt very bad about the situation. This will help her go through it

When the baby was born Auntie Araba took one or two of her relatives with her to Mansa's parents. Their purpose was simple. Mansa had returned safe from the battlefield, if Mansa's father wanted her back to school...

Battlefield. Childbirth back then was regarded as battlefield because child mortality rate was high and mothers lost their lives. So very often, through child birth because they weren't qualified birth attendants to deal with problems such as the baby coming with the feet or the baby's head being too big, most people died. Most mothers died along with their children. Sometimes because there was no way of having caesarean sections, no, that was impossible back then. So it was considered a battle. Some women also considered it as having to walk across a broomstick. A broomstick smeared with okro that was slimy. And so that was a battlefield.

Appendix 5: Sample interview data for “Something to talk about on the way to the funeral”

INTERVIEWER: *I THINK YOU VERY MUCH LIKED THE CHARACTER OF AUNTIE ARABA*

MONICA: *SORRY.*

INTERVIEWER: *YOU LIKED THE CHARACTER AUNTIE ARABA*

MONICA: *YES, THAT'S RIGHT*

INTERVIEWER: *WHAT IS IT THAT MADE YOU LIKE HER?*

MONICA: *SHE OBVIOUSLY SHE WAS KIND TO TAKE MANSA IN AND SHE WAS A DEDICATED MOTHER. SHE WANTED TO PROVIDE THE BEST FOR HER SON, GIVE HIM THE BEST EDUCATION. SHE WAS WORKING LONG HOURS TO GET THE MONEY TO GIVE HIM WHAT SHE FELT THAT HE NEEDED. AND I THINK THAT SHE HAD A HARD LIFE. WHEN SHE WAS SENT AWAY EITHER SHE WAS RAPED OR SHE BEING TOO YOUNG TO KNOW WHAT SHE WAS DOING AND GOT PREGNANT. YEAH.*

INTERVIEWER: *IT LOOKED THAT EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS SO GOOD A PERSON SO MANY BAD THINGS HAPPENED TO HER.*

MONICA: *HMHM, YEAH. BUT I DON'T THINK IT WAS ALL HER OWN FAULT. SHE COULD HAVE BEEN SHE COULD HAVE BROUGHT UP HER SON DIFFERENTLY. SHE COULD HAVE BROUGHT HIM UP WITH A LITTLE MORE RESPECT, NOT SPOILED HIM SO MUCH. THEN HE WOULD NOT HAVE GOT MANSA INTO TROUBLE AND HE WOULDN'T HAVE GONE ON TO MAKE ANOTHER GIRL PREGNANT. BUT I THINK AT THE TIME SHE THOUGHT SHE WAS DOING RIGHT.*

INTERVIEWER: *YOU THINK SHE COULD HAVE BROUGHT THIS BOY UP IN A DIFFERENT WAY?*

MONICA: *YES I THINK SHE COULD HAVE BROUGHT HER UP TO HAVE MORE RESPECT FOR HER, DISCIPLINED HIM MORE AND NOT SPOILED HIM TOO MUCH, MADE HIM REALISE, MADE HIM THINK OF, APPRECIATE OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS RATHER THAN HIS OWN.*

INTERVIEWER: *I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T REALLY APPRECIATE ATO'S*

CHARACTER. BUT DO YOU REALLY THINK AUNTIE ARABA COULD HAVE MADE ANY DIFFERENCE AT ALL IF SHE HAD DONE THINGS DIFFERENTLY WITH ATO?

MONICA

YEAH I THINK SO. BECAUSE NO CHILD GROWS UP, THERE IS A REASON FOR HIM BEING LIKE THAT. SHE SPOILT HIM TOO MUCH. AND HE REGARDED HIMSELF AS THE CENTRE OF HER UNIVERSE AND MADE HIM THINK OF HIMSELF AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HE ACTUALLY WAS. AND IF SHE HADN'T SPOILED HIM SO MUCH AND MADE HIM HAVE REGARD FOR OTHER PEOPLE THEN HE WOULD HAVE TURNED UP DIFFERENTLY.

INTERVIEWER:

YOU SEE THAT THE BOY DID NOT HAVE ANY RESPECT AT ALL FOR HIS MOTHER BUT EVERYONE ELSE RESPECTED HER WHY WAS IT LIKE THAT?

MONICA:

I THINK BECAUSE OF HER, HE IS HER FAMILY. I SUPPOSE SHE GETS ON WITH EVERYONE AROUND BUT HE IS HER ONLY SON. AND I MEAN SHE LOVES HIM VERY MUCH. IT IS DIFFERENT WHEN IT IS FAMILY. I THINK SHE WAS BLIND TO HIS FAULTS.

INTERVIEWER:

WHAT IS IT THAT IS STRIKING TO OTHER PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE FAMILY IN AUNTIE ARABA?

MONICA:

HER DRIVE. I THINK AND THE WAY THAT SHE OVERCOMES OBSTACLES SUCH AS GETTING PREGNANT AND NOT HAVING A HUSBAND AND THEN LOOKING AFTER MANSA WHO IS NOT HER OWN DAUGHTER. SHE IS TAKING IN SOMEONE ELSE'S DAUGHTER. SHE IS PROVIDING THIS GIRL WITH FOOD, WITH WORK. SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT.

Appendix 6: Scheme of categories for narrative processing

Narrative processing refers to the kind of interaction readers have with the text. This interaction may take place on different levels, which can be assessed by observing the extent to which readers' comprehension data relate with surface structure of the text. Readers manipulate textual materials in different ways to perform several different functions.

In the examples given below, segments which represent reading aloud from the text are presented in italics, the illustrative examples are underlined.

(a).Category: Monitoring

Code: (Monit)

Description: Readers monitor their reading processes by making comments on how they are coping with the text or how they are keeping track with what is going on in the text. This category depicts the reader not as involved with the text but with themselves as processors of the text.

Example: *At least you could tell me you wanted to / Would I be here if I didn't? / So she does this in a strange situation. / Can I think of reasons why they might be having this conversation like this?/*

(b).Primary Processes

Some segments will be found to be mere articulations of the surface structure of the text. The distinctions made here has to do with whether it is the reader's first pass of the text or a return to the text or that the reader is attending to only a portion of what they might have read before.

(i) Category: Reading

Code: (Read)

Description: Some segments represent the reader's first pass of the text, i.e. reading the particular text aloud for first time. They keep to the exact surface structure of the text. In the transcription these first passes were typed in italics and should be easy to identify and code. First passes should adhere fully to the lexical, syntactic and semantic structure of the text to be given this code.

Example: *These are small people. On the whole, on the average, on the pavements the people here are small. Small in the body /* These are small people body / So this is group of people described. / They could be physically small, but they could be mentally or other insignificant kind of people. /

(ii) Category: Rereading

Code: (Reread)

Description: Readers sometimes return to the text rereading the exact words.

Whenever there is any lexical or syntactic reformulation of the text this code may not be applied.

Example: They dug the older graves into the hillside, marking them with marbles and sand stone / They dug the older graves into the hillside. / Well older graves./

(iii) *Category: Focusing*

Code: (Focus)

Description: Readers sometimes return to individual words and phrases for particular attention. Some of these segments have discontinued structures indicating the points of the reader's concentration. If it is a whole sentence that is returned to then the segment would better be coded as "Rereading" rather than as "Focus."

Example: Kiss me Jean. No. No kissing / He is being pretty forceful there. / I mean he is just met her and he is telling her to kiss him. / And that seems forward. / But she is being to this graveyard to talk to God / No. kissing/

(c) *Secondary Processes*

Some segments are reformulations of the lexical and syntactic structure of the text. There is however semantic identity between those segments and the relevant parts of the reading text. These protocols are essentially re-expressions of propositional structure of the text.

(i) *Category: Questioning*

Code: (Quest)

Description: Readers sometimes focus on parts of the text by posing questions on what they might mean. Questions do not make additions to the semantic structure of the text. When readers ascribe some kind of significance to text in the form of an interrogative this code may not be used.

Example: In a graveyard to the west of the city a woman turns from the street and walks away / Why this? Is the graveyard, why is she turning from the graveyard to the west? /

(ii) *Category: Paraphrasing*

Code: (Para)

Description: This is when the surface textual content is reformulated into another lexical and syntactic structure. This coding covers segments in which readers offer definitions of some lexical items when trying to recover their senses. A segment may not be coded as a paraphrase if it contains any inference that may have been sourced either extratextually or from another part of the text.

Example: Help us to be good to each other. / That suggests she is talking about society / Just everyone. / Be with us. / She is asking for people to be good to each other/

(iii) *Category: Summarising*

Code: (Summ)

Description: This is when readers make a brief and concise syntactic and semantic formulation of parts of the text. They give the gist of the relevant text.

Example: Some people said they were like mother and daughter/

Yes, because Auntie Araba loved Mansa and she did everything possible to make her feel at home. So anybody who sees them may think Mansa is her daughter. But there is no quarrel between them. / They do everything together. / They eat together. / They don't quarrel. / They don't have any case to go out with it. / No, no. They don't do anything of the sort / Some people say they are like mother and daughter / *Others that they are like sisters* / Yes because they loved each other. / The child is also respectful. / The child does every work or helps the woman. / You see, so there is peace always. / They always loved.... / They did everything in common, / maybe they even they would, if the woman is going to a funeral, Mansa would follow her. / And they would dress in the same attire, and then walk gorgeously, walk majestically to wherever they are going. / *still more others even said they were like friends.* / Yes they were just like friends. / People had different views about their relationship/

(d) Tertiary Processes

Readers sometimes access information either from textual or extra textual sources which they use account for what is going on in the text. This process normally results in changes not only to the lexical and syntactic structure of the text but also in its semantic content. Tertiary processes serve not only to clarify the current text but also to throw light on other parts of the text and sometimes to link the text to situations in the real world. The processes that are distinguished here depend (either) on the source of the information used in the processing and/or the discourse function which the segment is used to perform.

(i) Category: Claiming

Code: (Claim)

Description: Segments are put into this category if they have been accessed from other parts of the text to make sense of current text being processed. This process serves to link the currently read text to other parts of the text and may help illuminate each other.

Example: *There are seven other families above them and she doesn't have the energy to talk her way through that. She is after all a small woman. / She lives on her own in a flat. / And she is concerned about how people are treating each other. / Help us to be good to each. / She wants people to treat each other well. / But she is completely on her own. / So you would have thought that she is hoping that her life will get better.*

(ii) Category: Explaining

Code: (Explain)

Description: This code is applied to segments in which readers may have accessed information from extra textual sources to make sense of the text.

Example: *They dug the older graves in the hillside, marking them with marbles and sand stone / They dug the older graves into the hillside. / Marble is quite lavish. You know what I mean / People with marble graves are more important than everyday marks of stone. / Sand stone is not really, that can't last that long, and weather and things like that. / Marble is quiet strong.*

(iii) Category: Hypothesis

Code: (Hypo)

Description: Readers use normally modal structures when they adopt this strategy of processing. There are varying degrees of uncertainty in what they take to be the significance of the text. Readers may have accessed textual or extra textual information and may have used them to make postulations, which are meant to give probable accounts of the relevant texts. A hypothesis may be confirmed (ConfHypo) or disconfirmed (DiscHypo).

Example: *He stands in his overall both hands in his pockets smile at an angle and his weight on one leg. / Why he stands in his overall? / He is obviously back to his drills. He is a mechanic, mechanical kind of work. / So it is obviously, it is an obsession he has. It started through his work / Behind him is the wooden fence at the bottom of her mother's garden / Maybe they met when she was still living with her parents. / She would be quite young./*

(iv) Category: Analogising

Code: (Anal)

Description: Readers sometimes are reminded of an earlier part of the text or some experiences which they may have had, told or read earlier and they draw comparisons or contrasts between textual material which they are currently reading and those experiences they have been reminded of.

Example: *There are seven families above them and she doesn't have the energy to talk her way through that. She is after all a small woman / Again that reminds me of Edinburgh and the tenements on the royal mile. / I think they keep up to about thirteen stories. / And that seven other families above them. / That is the picture it gives me. / But then again it could be a modern high-rise block./*

(v) Category: Evaluating

Code: (Eval)

Description: These segments express readers' assessment of a narrative character or situation. These are meant to indicate the reader's (dis)approval, criticisms, commendations, empathy, etc, not only of characters but sometimes also of what they perceive to be the author's position.

Example: *There are seven other families above them and she doesn't have the energy to talk her way through that. She is after all a small woman. / She starts muttering and she asks God to help everyone else, which is selfless. In that sense she is selfless. / You would admire her moral for doing that. / But in that sense she seems to get it all wrong when she thinks she cannot pray in a flat and she needs to be in a cemetery and seven other families apparently blocking the way. / She doesn't have the energy to talk her way through that. / It is not that you have to talk harder or louder to get to God to listen./*

(vi) Category: Applying

Code: (Appli)

Description: Sometimes readers use material from the text as the basis for comments about extra textual personalities and situations. These comments may not result in a critique but may serve to illuminate extratextual reality or even recommend behaviour in real life situation.

Example: Anyway Auntie Araba's mother took her daughter in and treated her like an egg until the child was born.

And I think that is what every mother should be doing. / No matter whatever way a child goes getting pregnant, you may never know you may have a child who never does anything and then just a mistake. / I am not saying every person should go doing that, but once it happens the mothers should be there standing behind your daughter., show her your support / because leaving her wallowing in and around wouldn't teach her any lesson. / She will know she passed through pain, she will pass it on to her child. / Who knows what the child may do for you? / So I think mothers in Ghana must learn from Auntie Araba's mum

(vii) *Category: Predicting*

Code: (Pred)

Description: While keeping track of what is going on in the narrative, readers may at times anticipate what they think may or not happen in the future as the narrative unfolds. Predictions may be later on be confirmed (ConfPred) or disconfirmed (DiscPred).

Example: So Auntie Araba said in that case there was no problem. Mansa was a good girl. The child and mother should go on living with her until Ato finished his education then they could marry properly. / That is a dream. She is dreaming wild. / Because, I don't think if Ato finishes his education he will come and marry a school dropout. / That is what they call a school drop out with a born one. / Please she is dreaming wild. / I think she should forget about it. / She has good plans for Mansa but then it is not going to work. / For Ato going through college, he is going to meet other girls who will come out with him / and he is going to marry a graduate or someone he came out with from school. / He wouldn't want.../

Appendix 7: Scheme of categories for mental representations

The scheme classifies readers' internal representation by means of a finite number of features. Readers' models of the textual situation have most of the features of the real world. They are characterised by specific spatial and temporal co-ordinates and have distinctive forms of on-going activities carried out for different reasons. There are a variety of moods and changes in atmosphere. The textual world is populated by different kinds of characters, whose lives are moderated variously by different kinds of goals, beliefs, norms, relationships and practices.

Since this study is meant to account for the use of cultural knowledge and personal experience in the construction of readers' mental representations, these categories should be applied only to segments that have already been assigned tertiary level processing categories.

(a) Setting

Readers sometimes describe the location and surroundings of characters in terms of time and space, and the material objects that identify those places.

(i) Category: Temporal and spatial setting

Code (TSS)

Description: Spatial co-ordinates describe the physical location or setting of the narrative. This location may be referring to the natural background or even to a built environment.

Example: Sleet is falling /.

Sleet. Sleet./

I think, makes everything, maybe I think, it is windy sleet, makes everything calm./

It is a bit rainy, but snow white and pure. / Makes everything look more peaceful.

/ Or maybe it is windy. / It is hard and it is cold. /

And makes everything soggy and worsening her situation /

(ii) Category: Mood and Atmosphere

Code: (MDA)

Description: This category applies to segments which refer to the prevailing effects of the setting, character' moods and behaviour on the temper of the narrative. The atmosphere may be friendly, pleasant, tragic, tense, light-hearted or even hostile and sorrowful.

Example: A woman turns from the street and walks away. The cemetery has no light/ Again dark and cold; scary/

(iii) Category: Character's habitation, domestic surroundings,

Code: (HDS)

Description: This category is to be distinguished from (TSS) in the sense that it applies to more personally to the individual character in a way that the spatial coordinates described above do not. We find here

descriptions of the character's home, rooms, furniture and other decorations, and some other material possessions that may be found there.

Example: Brian folds the sofa open fetches up the sheets/ So it is a sofa bed so it is a bed-sit. / They don't have a bedroom. / They have to double up the bedroom as a living room./

(b) *Category: Activity*

Code: (ACT)

Description: This category covers the events and episodes of the narrative. Narrative activity has the features of causality and consequence. Readers tend to keep track of what characters are doing or what is generally going on in the narrative world.

Example: He separates the pages of this evening's paper / Crumbling them; the crunching sound of the paper full of adverts good stories and bad stories / And rolls them and twists them for the fire /. So they do have a fire./ That again is a warm image. / I think he is waiting for her to come back and trying to make the flat a bit nice and comfortable for her. /

(c) *Character descriptions*

Some segments indicate readers' efforts at constructing a physical, psychological, mental or social identity for characters.

(i) *Category: Physical Descriptions*

Code: (PSD)

Description: These descriptions indicate characters' physical appearance and include references to their facial features, complexion, stature and build, dressing, gait, health and personal hygiene, disabilities, etc. Characters may be identified as good looking, fresh, youthful, thin, drably dressed or walking with a limp, etc.

Example: No. What if Brian saw you? / So she is having an affair with him./ I think Brian is maybe her boyfriend fiancé or husband. / The name Brian, well my dad's name is Brian./ So I get the image of somebody who lives like my dad. Big, dark hair/

(ii) *Category: Personal Background*

Code: (PBI)

Description: This category applies to references to the ethnic and social background of the character. All statements that describe the character's family background, education, skills, occupations, etc are put under this category. Some characters may be identified as immigrants, unemployed, married, professionals, rich or elderly.

Example: On cloudy nights she doesn't bother and there is no point praying in the flat. There are seven families above them/ And that suggests she is not that wealthy. / She is doesn't own her house. / Flats are usually quite small compared to houses. / So she, I can imagine does not have a lot of money./

(iii) *Category: Cognitive and Affective State*

Code: (CAS)

Descriptions: This category accounts for the character's internal mental state of the character. The reader's references to the character's thoughts, plans, hopes, desires, intentions, memories, emotions, affections, etc are put into this category.

Example: *At least you could tell me you want to. Would I be here if I didn't? Oh Jean. / That is really strange. /*

It's like they know each other. / Maybe it is like they are going out with each other. / And because she actually wants to be with him in a kind of sexual way. / If she was a prostitute she cannot enjoy it. / That is what I thought. /

(iv) *Category: Attitudes and Behavioural Traits*

Code: (ACB)

Description: This category is distinguished from CAS even though it also refers to an internal disposition of the character. It accounts for some aspects of the character's nature which may be assessed from their behavioural patterns, traits, mannerisms, and habits.

Example: *The walk leaves her too much time to think. / So she is a really a contemplative deep kind of person, sort of morose person. Not really morose, but this kind of sorrowful. /*

(v) *Category: Character's Life Situation*

Code: (CLS)

Description: Readers tend to describe characters in terms of the situation their lives. Characters may be deprived or under some kind of oppression, or even be living a life of opulence and luxury.

Example: *Nothing has survived but the image. / His smile is gone, the sun is gone. / The image. The image. Nothing has survived. / And it is very pessimistic. / Nothing. / What must have happened in their lives since they met? / Maybe they met and were happy together. But then, then they had jobs and for some reason they lost their jobs. / Maybe there was recession or maybe they are just not happy with each other anymore. / They, but I think Jean still loves Brian because she has got his photo in her handbag. / But they are not going anywhere. / They are stuck in this council flat and neither of them is happy anymore. They are not young. They are not full of life. / They don't see the good things; they only see more the bad things. /*

(d) *Category: Personal Human Relations*

Code: (PHR)

Description: Some segments represent readers' attempts to account for the way characters relate to one another on the personal and individual level. The relationships may be loving or indifferent, warm or tense, equal or dominating.

Example: *Jean has a photograph of Brian / Maybe it is in her wallet that she keeps of him when they were happier and younger. / I imagine a passport photo of him smiling or a photo of him with friends. An old one / She keeps it in her handbag. But she knows it off by heart. / So she always takes the photo out and looks at it / She got a big handbag full of clutter. / But one thing I think, one thing that she reaches for is the photo of Brian. / So I think he is quite like a rock for her. / He is quite strong but I think he used to be. / Maybe she is living with how he used to be in the past, because she knows it off by heart. / She used to look at it a lot. I think she loves him*

because she is always... / He represents security and something happy in her life.

/

(e) Social relations

Characters tend to belong to particular social groups and there are a number of such groups representing different types of activities, beliefs, levels of social cohesion, power relations based on a number of criteria.

(i) *Category*: Patterns of life, occupations social behaviour

Code: (OPR)

Description: This category applies to references to ordinary life patterns within the communities presented in the narrative. It applies also to common public, attitudes, prejudices and views. Communities may be identified as agricultural or as a working class. The category covers the prevailing social and economic situation, the passing fashions and trends that temporarily obsess people, and the attitudes and feelings people generally have about things going on in the narrative.

Example: *Mansa had returned from the battlefield safe, if Mansa's father wanted to her to go back to school... Yes some girls do this. But Mansa's father had lost interest in Mansa's education. I can understand him. I too / In Africa or in Ghana we take delivery, or a woman going to deliver as a battle. / She could die or come back. So here she has come safely. / Once you have a child, that is the African mentality, they feel once you have a child stay home. Right? Once you have a child stay at home. / The boys always get out scot free. / They go through school and all that; nothing happens to them.*

(ii) *Category*: Class structure, tensions and conflicts

Code: (CST)

Description: Some of readers' make references to class differences, power relations between the classes and the tensions and conflicts that obtain between them. When behaviour is not assessed in terms of it coming from a person as a human individual but as coming from someone who is a member of a particular group or class of individuals, then class and social differentiation is the issue at stake.

Example: *Low voices murmur calling after dreams while in other places small people run amongst machinery their faces shut/Why is people murmuring, calling after dreams?/ This is small people running amongst machinery./ I think this small people are insignificant people used in society, as in child labour, slave labour / or just manipulated so that they have to do awful jobs amongst machinery/*

(iii) *Category*: Belief systems

Code: (BST)

Description: This category is reserved for those segments that express the religious and/or other ideological views which underlie social life and reality. Such beliefs may be held privately by an individual character or by a whole community. It should be noted that it is references to beliefs that may be put into this category and not the individual who holds those beliefs.

Example: Her husband, you know has already died. So three months ago she packed all she had and came here to squat by her ancestral hearth. / Hearths are like what you associate with kinship values. / People bond through the hearth. / Hearth is where you cook and you feed people. / People who are like strangers eat and you create a bond, which is like a family. / And you create a physical bond by eating the same stuff, and cooking for people. / And unless you feel like a bond with ancestral hearth, / maybe that is her means of communicating with the ancestors.

(iv) *Category: Social and religious practices*

Code: (SRP)

Descriptions: These are the rituals, performances and procedures that express the socio-cultural lives of the people. Readers may indicate the origins of those practices, their social or religious value, and details about the procedures involved.

Example: Oh and many other problems. But he will see to all before next Akwanbo. / I don't know what Akwanbo is. I don't know. / Whatever that is, it is a kind of meeting, a kind of congregation between people. It is a kind of meeting. /

(v) *Category: Morality and Value System*

Code: (MVS)

Descriptions: This code describes the moral and value systems that may lead to evaluative statements about good or bad behaviour. Some of these statements may be generated by systems held readers themselves or by other people they know, or by what they consider to be obtaining in the narrative world. /

Example: Yet in less than four years they found that she was in trouble / . And what trouble might that be? / That lawyer or doctor or something like that who was the lady's husband? / I am very sure the man has raped or had an affair with the lady / But this thing stands against the customs of the people who perform the puberty rites in Ghana here. / Because if the person has sex or knows a man before the time of initiation, it is very embarrassing and the family members are disgraced. /

(vi) *Category: Ethnic and historical facts*

Code: (EHF)

Descriptions: These are facts pertaining to the history, myths, legends or other ethnic experience of a particular group or community. Readers may have accessed this kind of information to explain character behaviour, community attitude or any aspect of life.

Example: And that might have been true. She mixed her dough far into the night and with the first cock crow got up from bed to light her fires. / She couldn't sleep because she was working. / She is working to support the family and quite probably to pay for her son to be educated. / Except on Sundays. / I am guessing she went to church, and a day of rest typical of the Christian religion. / The fact that there was a chapel here, where the school was held suggests that there is Christian religion here. / At some point there have been missionaries and people have been converted from whatever their belief was before. /

Appendix 8: Data display of scores for processing strategies

Row	Subject	Group	Text	Monit	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Misread
1	Andy	1	1	34	82	68	234	1
2	Briony	1	1	85	92	43	288	2
3	Eliza	1	1	60	103	62	450	1
4	Helen	1	1	24	80	61	377	1
5	Jo	1	1	26	83	60	307	2
6	Justin	1	1	30	81	66	213	1
7	Karin	1	1	62	82	71	570	1
8	Martin	1	1	100	110	50	262	3
9	Monica	1	1	73	188	45	267	1
10	Suzy	1	1	62	162	38	214	1
11	Ama	2	1	13	27	41	111	1
12	Atsu	2	1	28	66	79	108	32
13	Deborah	2	1	9	38	66	71	7
14	Felix	2	1	73	85	103	116	6
15	George	2	1	125	130	136	114	34
16	Hilda	2	1	5	38	72	76	9
17	James	2	1	25	59	76	98	19
18	Jacqueline	2	1	26	59	46	84	3
19	Nii	2	1	24	62	47	72	2
20	Rose	2	1	15	32	48	149	1
21	Andy	1	2	62	114	151	226	1
22	Briony	1	2	65	64	81	225	1
23	Eliza	1	2	43	59	78	357	4
24	Helen	1	2	52	118	104	314	4
25	Jo	1	2	48	91	86	267	2
26	Justin	1	2	60	71	105	199	2
27	Karin	1	2	45	63	84	420	6
28	Martin	1	2	88	47	85	206	1
29	Monica	1	2	34	164	69	232	1
30	Suzy	1	2	30	143	67	202	1
31	Ama	2	2	15	12	52	173	1
32	Atsu	2	2	52	34	137	202	18
33	Deborah	2	2	15	24	118	148	6
34	Felix	2	2	62	48	117	173	1
35	George	2	2	98	70	151	212	4
36	Hilda	2	2	13	24	150	154	10
37	James	2	2	44	30	104	182	9
38	Jacqueline	2	2	19	14	116	247	1
39	Nii	2	2	16	34	88	205	1
40	Rose	2	2	20	7	52	224	1

Appendix 9: Data display of scores for tertiary level processes

Row	Subject	Group	Text	Hypo	Claim	Explain	Other	Total
1	Andy	1	1	65	137	1	32	234
2	Briony	1	1	67	156	32	33	288
3	Eliza	1	1	105	263	34	48	450
4	Helen	1	1	94	242	7	34	377
5	Jo	1	1	90	180	5	32	307
6	Justin	1	1	60	128	1	25	213
7	Karin	1	1	128	319	58	65	570
8	Martin	1	1	51	140	28	43	262
9	Monica	1	1	55	166	22	24	267
10	Suzy	1	1	42	120	16	36	214
11	Ama	2	1	10	82	18	1	111
12	Atsu	2	1	42	57	9	1	108
13	Deborah	2	1	18	48	5	1	71
14	Felix	2	1	32	70	10	4	116
15	George	2	1	37	62	8	7	114
16	Hilda	2	1	16	56	2	2	76
17	James	2	1	40	52	6	1	98
18	Jacqueline	2	1	3	77	2	2	84
19	Nii	2	1	2	66	1	3	72
20	Rose	2	1	14	105	27	3	149
21	Andy	1	2	64	134	4	24	226
22	Briony	1	2	79	131	6	9	225
23	Eliza	1	2	122	190	23	22	357
24	Helen	1	2	93	196	5	20	314
25	Jo	1	2	95	153	4	15	267
26	Justin	1	2	68	112	3	16	199
27	Karin	1	2	116	236	24	44	420
28	Martin	1	2	56	129	8	13	206
29	Monica	1	2	61	140	18	13	232
30	Suzy	1	2	67	110	14	11	202
31	Ama	2	2	7	62	95	9	173
32	Atsu	2	2	31	70	76	25	202
33	Deborah	2	2	27	62	38	21	148
34	Felix	2	2	35	69	47	22	173
35	George	2	2	38	98	41	35	212
36	Hilda	2	2	31	58	44	21	154
37	James	2	2	28	72	62	20	182
38	Jacqueline	2	2	6	76	104	61	247
39	Nii	2	2	8	62	93	42	205
40	Rose	2	2	11	79	121	13	224

Appendix 10: Data display of scores for categories of experience

Data Display

Row	Subject	Group	TEXT	PSD	PBI	CAS	ACB	CLS	PHR	SETT	SocReal	ACT
1	Andy	1	1	7	20	39	7	20	26	11	21	20
2	Briony	1	1	26	18	50	10	7	25	43	19	35
3	Eliza	1	1	18	30	86	17	38	30	31	22	54
4	Helen	1	1	24	20	85	12	22	27	51	10	50
5	Jo	1	1	9	36	51	13	28	39	19	19	31
6	Justin	1	1	9	23	37	7	12	16	27	16	35
7	Karin	1	1	21	37	101	21	45	35	22	40	66
8	Martin	1	1	10	18	29	2	10	11	43	9	24
9	Monica	1	1	16	15	51	8	6	28	37	12	28
10	Suzy	1	1	16	12	65	10	17	25	34	9	54
11	Ama	2	1	10	21	17	8	9	7	18	6	24
12	Atsu	2	1	8	11	30	7	9	6	13	11	21
13	Deborah	2	1	5	6	16	6	2	11	10	2	22
14	Felix	2	1	6	10	25	4	8	5	9	10	20
15	George	2	1	7	19	18	7	7	12	21	12	39
16	Hilda	2	1	3	4	12	4	10	4	5	3	14
17	Jacqueline	2	1	5	12	20	1	6	10	13	6	12
18	James	2	1	8	26	29	10	14	15	14	12	40
19	Nii	2	1	5	15	26	3	5	12	14	5	21
20	Rose	2	1	6	15	16	3	10	11	19	8	15
21	Andy	1	2	9	15	45	20	13	4	1	45	50
22	Briony	1	2	13	12	46	15	14	8	6	25	55
23	Eliza	1	2	8	20	84	35	26	14	2	79	63
24	Helen	1	2	15	36	76	24	8	8	6	32	46
25	Jo	1	2	11	22	58	25	20	9	2	44	57
26	Justin	1	2	7	12	25	19	23	7	8	33	42
27	Karin	1	2	9	22	93	39	45	18	13	100	83
28	Martin	1	2	4	5	18	9	15	2	4	34	39
29	Monica	1	2	12	8	48	15	12	7	6	23	57
30	Suzy	1	2	14	31	54	18	7	7	4	22	37
31	Ama	2	2	13	19	33	22	10	13	3	52	47
32	Atsu	2	2	8	6	39	17	2	4	1	23	63
33	Deborah	2	2	3	13	23	22	2	5	4	27	46
34	Felix	2	2	7	4	35	15	3	6	1	45	58
35	George	2	2	6	22	23	9	8	1	8	26	33
36	Hilda	2	2	2	6	26	19	2	2	1	15	35
37	Jacqueline	2	2	4	7	30	5	11	3	3	89	50
38	James	2	2	5	19	20	10	11	2	7	57	41
39	Nii	2	2	6	7	40	7	13	5	4	66	52
40	Rose	2	2	5	5	15	15	10	5	2	49	30